

May 14, 2013

London Borough of Camden
Development Management
London WC1H 9PP



Comments on planning application 2013/1598/P (University of London Garden Halls and Cartwright Gardens)

I wish to object to this proposal

I have been a resident of Sandwich House for twenty years.

The building proposed in the place of Hughes Parry, Canterbury, and Commonwealth Halls is too big, fortress-like, and monolithic. No one can begrudge students better living conditions, but the increase of volume of the proposed building seems proportionally more than the increase of students. The frontage of the proposed building is higher than the surrounding buildings (especially the buildings in the crescent), as is shown by the model displayed in Commonwealth Hall. It replaces the three halls, at one end built round a tower (Hughes Parry Hall), at the other end built round a nine storey block (Commonwealth Hall). The central building (Canterbury Hall) is the only one which is regular. Both Commonwealth Hall and Hughes Parry Hall are stepped back and indented, forming courtyards which open on to Sandwich Street (and, to a lesser extent, also on the Cartwright Gardens side). There is a variety of height and volume in these two end buildings, the height contrasting with low level or ground level portions, which gives a sense of changing space and distances. In contrast, there is no break in the fairly uniform exterior of the proposed building, which keeps relentlessly to the perimeter of the site. This helps to give it its fortress-like appearance, which in turn will darken the surrounding streets.

If rebuilding rather than refurbishment is so important, why doesn't Hughes Parry Tower come down? Is it because putting up a new tower at the same time as a nine storey building would reveal what a large volume of space was being taken by this proposed new building?

I live on one of the staircases in Sandwich House, directly opposite the car park below Hughes Parry tower. I would be very badly affected by the new building, as would most

of Sandwich House. In the afternoon, in the summer, my sitting room which looks onto Sandwich Street is bathed in sun, and I can see the tops of trees in Cartwright Gardens. I would lose this, and be faced on the opposite side of the road with a line of 'town houses' and the rear of the tall frontage of the building. I was surprised to see, in the report on light, that the light and sun loss to flats on this staircase was spoken of as 'minor' or negligible'. It seemed such a strange thing to say that I am still prepared to be told that I haven't understood the report correctly. What the report seemed to say was that *if* a building had been built over the car park, similar to Canterbury Hall, my light loss would have been very little. But the building was *not* built there, and the courtyard is part of what I feel is the great variety of building surrounding the tall blocks of Commonwealth Hall, and Hughes Parry tower. And my light and sun loss will be great, as will the loss of light and sun to most of Sandwich House.

All deliveries will now be funnelled into a delivery passage at the base of Hughes Parry tower. Deliveries are now made at different points in Sandwich Street. So there will be an increase in deliveries at this one point, for that reason. There will also be an increase because there will be more students. Once again the residents of Sandwich House will be badly affected.

It is not the University of London which will be building, managing, and indeed I believe owning this building (until it is handed back after a number of years), but UPP. As I understand it, this is what used to be called a PFI scheme. I think it is regrettable that the University has chosen to go down this path. Residents will potentially have two tiers of management to contend with, if there is a difficult problem, one tier naturally more interested in economies and profits.

It is good that it is proposed that Cartwright Gardens will be opened to the public (it would have been good if this had been done anyway) but at the moment I feel this is rather like a sweetener. I don't recall that it was part of the original proposal. Cartwright Gardens is also a small space compared to say, Gordon Square. If the price of opening Cartwright Gardens to the public, is having the proposed new building, I would be happy to leave Cartwright gardens restricted to students as it is now.



