

15<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Re: Cavendish School, 31 Inverness Street, NW1 ; Application 2014/3117/P

For the attention of Seonaid Carr.

Dear Seonaid,

We are writing on behalf of the Camden Town CAAC.

We have spent a long time in considering the revised plans for the Cavendish School extension and find that these designs are not acceptable and will need further revision.

One characteristic of our Conservation Area is the short street with a variety of different building types, sizes, ages and gaps in contrast to the regular nature of our listed residential terraces and commercial streets. The south side of Inverness Street is one such streetscape and its character must be preserved.

Bearing this in mind, we feel that the proposed Inverness Street façade fails to preserve and enhance the character of our Conservation Area in a number of ways:

- 1 The architectural character of the façade is inconsistent – it is neither Neo-Georgian or truly modern. It lacks compositional creativity.
- 2 The façade's character is a commercial one rather than educational and has dominant windows on the first and second floors suggesting residential but having no logical relationship with the window openings on nearby facades. The use of projecting window frames and odd fenestration is also questionable. Also the wide strip of full height glazing on the ground floor is particularly inappropriate in the non-commercial part of Inverness Street. It could be a shop or tourist agency. As an entrance or exit for children it seems unfriendly and industrial in character. We also query the design decision to glaze directly in front of the solid walling of the refuse store. The height and scale of the ground floor architectural elements and signage above have been increased by 10% more than the previous proposal resulting in a composition more out of scale with the streetscape than before.
- 3 We also question the dominance of the Plant Room which is now higher than the first scheme. Although well set back and probably not visible from the street, it will be clearly seen from the first floor windows of the terrace opposite.
- 4 Running the street façade flush with and next to Camden House removes the existing important gap and reduces Camden House's character and form as it was designed as a free-standing building. This is expressed by its red-brick quoins and ground floor cornice which wrap around its west corner.( See photo 6 in the

application's D&A statement.) Consequently we feel that the school's façade should be set further back to visually separate it from Camden House.

- 5 By contrast, the 1990s housing on the North side of Inverness Street successfully continued the original 19<sup>th</sup> C terrace by using reticent modern forms with small doors and window openings.

We strongly feel that a more discrete and sensitive design is needed, one that expresses the character of a school instead of a commercial building and that preserves and enhances the main characteristics existing in this short street.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Macqueen & Margaret Richardson, Co-Chairs of the Camden Town CAAC,  
31 Oval Road, NW1 7EA