

Ms Angela Ryan
Planning Officer
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
C/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

07 November 2014

Ref: EP/CLD14-1086
BY EMAIL

Dear Ms Ryan,

RE: LPA REFS: 2014/5995/P & 2014/6187/L – ST JOHN’S CHURCH, DOWNSHIRE HILL, NW3

Subsequent to our letter dated 22 October 2014, we write again on behalf of Mr & Mrs N Steward, Mr & Mrs R Katz, Mr & Mrs A Gemes and Mr & Mrs J Rosefield, the freehold occupiers of The White House (Keats Grove), 1 Keats Grove, 2 Keats Grove and 3 Keats Grove, respectively; in light of the additional information submitted by the applicant in respect of the above.

As you will be aware, St John’s Church has already been significantly extended and altered by way of a planning permission (Ref: PWX0103576), which was fully implemented in 2005. Subsequently, it is the view of our clients, who closely neighbour the premises, that the church has already undergone substantial intensification of use by way of the previous under-croft extension. Furthermore, it is their view that this has proved detrimental to the residential character of the area, and the amenity of local residents.

When considering the further extension proposed, and in light of the information submitted by the applicant in relation to the proposed use of the extended space, it is our clients serious concern that the proposed works will further intensify the use, above and beyond that which would be acceptable within a Grade I listed church building.

Whilst it is recognised that religious buildings need to diversify their community and pastoral offer, it is considered that the historic importance of the building is under threat from the significant intensification of the use. This in combination with the proposed extension, which would disrupt the architectural character of the building, will be detrimental to the listed church, and its setting.

We note the objection to the proposals by the Heath and Hampstead Society (dated 20th October 2014), which questions the need for such an intrusive extension. Accordingly, our clients wholly endorse the Society’s response, which also confirms that:

“It is relevant that the boundary railings are specifically listed, as well as the church itself, indicating that its immediate surroundings are considered part of the overall site architecture.”

As such, and whilst a further drawn elevation of the proposed southern aspect of the extension has been submitted by the applicant, we do not consider that this additional information alongside that concerning the uses of the church, outweighs the significant harm that would be imposed upon the heritage asset and its immediate landscaped setting, if these proposals were to be approved.

Furthermore, our clients are deeply concerned that should this extension be allowed, the way will be paved for future applications seeking continued incremental and adverse changes to the building, and its setting, and to the detriment of the amenity of the area.

We therefore reiterate our client's request that these applications (LPA Refs: 2014/5995/P & 2014/6187/L) be refused.

We hope that our comments will assist in your determination of this application, and we would like to be informed should the case come to Committee. Please contact Ela Palmer (0203 725 3852) or Claire Day (0203 435 4214) of this office in the first instance should you have any questions or to notify us of any changes to or progression of the application.

Yours sincerely,

Ela Palmer BA MSc IHBC
ASSOCIATE, HERITAGE

cc. Mr & Mrs N Steward
Mr & Mrs R Katz
Mr & Mrs A Gemes
Mr & Mrs J Rosefield
Mr J Malet-Bates – Hampstead CAAS