

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 16:26
To: Planning
Cc: Heather, Christopher
Subject: Objection against the proposed development of 21-31 New Oxford Street - 2014/5946/ P

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of Tavistock Chambers Residents' Association I wish to strongly object to the proposed development on the grounds that the building will have a negative impact on the surrounding area and that the proposal clearly runs counter to Camden's existing planning brief for the site. In particular, our concerns are as follows:-

1. Design, Size and Height of building

The proposal for the redevelopment envisages an increase in the height of the building of 6m (almost 3 stories) and building out the upper floors closer to the street frontage which will increase the size of the building by 120,000 sq ft. This new building will tower over the British Museum (the most visited tourist attraction in the UK), St George's (a classic Hawksmoor church) and neighbouring conservation areas full of lower level buildings of Georgian and Victorian design. This more modern design is out of character and any potential negative impact this will have was one of the key considerations of the planning brief.

The current stepping back of the upper floors also aligns the frontage of the building with neighbouring sites creating a continuity in the skyline. By bringing them forward, the building creates a canyon effect in adjacent roads, jars against the surroundings, negatively impacts light to surrounding residential blocks and also blocks views that are considered of rich importance to the area. The planning brief lists the views south from Museum Street and the view of Centrepont from Holborn as of critical import. The proposal obscures Centrepont and towers over Commonwealth House from the East and acts as a visual 'full stop' discouraging pedestrian traffic from the British Museum through to Covent Garden.

2. Impact of New Uses

The original brief suggested that this site was considered of major importance in the provision of new housing for this area. It also recommended that cultural use similar to that that had received planning permission for the British Museum was desirable, as was tourism usage. Community use was also flagged as extremely desirable.

Instead, we find ourselves presented with plans for a speculative office block with double-height retail at ground floor level and paltry provision of just 21 flats with single aspect above the service entrance for the building. This minimal housing provision was accurately described at the public meeting as akin to 'putting lipstick on a pig'.

This is similar to the type of development at St Giles, large elements of which still sit empty after many years. A mix of uses in line with the original brief should be enforced against the short-term plan of a time-limited investment trust to leverage off the development of Crossrail (built with public money) and designed with a quick sale in mind rather than long-term benefit to the area.

The developers have also been completely defiant in offering any additional public open space (they will not countenance a roof garden as this would make future height increases problematic and reduce the sell-on value) and have not even offered to house an urgently required doctor's surgery at ground floor level to house the current Museum practice. This is in clear breach of the requirement to deliver additional open space and community use.

Please could you confirm that this email has been received.

Patsy Prince
Tavistock Chambers RA - Chair

Flat 4
Tavistock Chambers
40 Bloomsbury Way
London WC1A 2SE



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From: Hilary Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 19:15
To: Planning
Subject: App'n no: 2014/5946/P

App'n no: 2014/5946/P

21/31 New Oxford Street : Royal Mail Sorting Office

I wish to object in the strongest terms to the planning application being made with regard to this site.

It is frankly too big

Another 3 stories would be added to the height of the Sorting Office. The developers propose building out to the edge of the plot and all the way up (the existing already too bulky structure. The existing building is a small block set back on top of a bigger block, which helps reduces impact)

Almost no community benefit

The bare minimum of housing has been squeezed onto the **really grim** High Holborn side of the block; 21 flats which may or may not be 'affordable'. That's it, no other community uses at all on a one acre site. Do they have to be so greedy?

Overpowers the view from the British Museum

This building is 200 steps from a world class heritage destination. 7 million people visit each year. Their way through to Covent Garden will appear to be blocked by a crass commercial tower as they walk down Museum Street

City style not Bloomsbury style

The proposal which might look at home in the City, is totally out of scale and character here. The entire roofline will reach the same height as the top of Hawksmoor's steeple opposite. The glass and steel structure will dwarf the human scale of the surrounding conservation areas and further degrade the setting of numerous listed buildings.

Yours sincerely

Hilary A Smith [address and title in signature below]

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Hilary A Smith BA MPhil
Blue Badge Guide

9 Betterton House
Betterton Street
LONDON WC2H 9BT



[REDACTED]

From: Barbara Douglass [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 19:16
To: Planning
Subject: Future of 21/31 New Oxford Street

Dear Sirs,

Ref: 2014/5946/P 21-31 New Oxford Street.

I am writing to object to the plans laid out for the redevelopment of the old GPO sorting office at 21/31 New Oxford Street for the main following reasons.

1. The height and breadth of the building will be out of proportion to the surrounding area, much of which is of intrinsic historical value and is a primary conservation area. I am concerned that the view of the iconic tower of St. George's Church, the last of Hawksmoor's great Churches, will be obscured.
2. I understand that there will be no space in the proposed building for community use, such as suitable space for the Museum Practice surgery to move into.
3. More housing is desperately needed in Camden, and the proposed number of dwellings seems grossly inadequate in proportion to the size of the building.

Yours sincerely,
Barbara Douglass, 10 Cranfield House, 97-107 Southampton Row, WC1B 4HH.

[REDACTED]

From: Matthew Bennett [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 19:36
To: Planning
Subject: Ref 2014/5946/P 21-31 New Oxford Street

I write to object to the above application and the increase in height and bulk by the addition of 3 additional floors which would be totally inappropriate given its location close to the British Museum and neighbouring conservation areas. If approved the scheme would be far too dominant in the streetscape. It offers absolutely minimal public benefit in terms of the 21 housing units and is a completely lost opportunity to create a building which would enhance this rather bland part of 'midtown'.

I ask that this application be refused if it not withdrawn and the applicants asked to submit an application which relates much more closely to the council's planning brief and enhances rather than degrades the area.

Yours

Matthew Bennett

[REDACTED]

From: Bill Mitchell [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 20:03
To: Planning
Subject: Reference 2014/5946/P for 21-31 New Oxford Street

Dear Planning,

I object to the planning application for the old post office. It's design isn't suited to the area, especially given the fact that it towers over other neighbouring conservation areas. It's style is far too modern. It doesn't incorporate any public space and there is very limited housing, which is also placed in a bad position (overlooking the busy High Holborn. Wouldn't this housing be noisy, given it's above an entrance?

Please reject this and ask them to come up with something more in keeping with the area, with more housing, and more public space.

Regards,

Dr William L Mitchell



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