18 Russell Chambers

Bury Place

London

WC1A 2JU

[redacted]

Camden Council

Development Control

Town Hall

Judd Street

London

For the Attention of Chris Heather

25.11.2014

Dear Sir,

I am writing to object to the proposals submitted for the redevelopment of 21-31 New Oxford Street [2014/5946/P].

There are a number of reasons why Camden Council should refuse this planning application. While the existing building is in need of redevelopment a refusal would allow the applicant time to make fundamental changes to the scheme so that it complies with the current planning policies and statutory restrictions on development which Camden Council have a duty to uphold. These reasons consist of:

- The overall massing of the scheme is out of place with the existing location. The current building steps back so that its façades align with the surrounding buildings which is an acceptable approach to the overall massing. The proposals increase both the size vertically and horizontally creating a more dominating mass which is out of character with the surrounding conservation areas of Bloomsbury Conservation Area and Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. This increased mass also has a detrimental effect on the surroundings of Hawksmoor's Grade 1 listed St.George's Church.
- The developer's Landscape and Visual Assessment Analysis shows the increased mass to be of a significant impact and overbearing nature on the surrounding buildings. See images below.(this effects key views from both the British Museum and Holborn Station)
- Increasing the massing along the west elevation creates problems of overlooking and reduced daylighting to the adjacent residential properties along Museum Street. The applicants document 'Town Planning Statement' [12.13] shows that the proposal fails

to meet the BRE guidelines on daylighting along this street. The proposed development should therefore be refused on this ground.

- Insufficient public amenities. The proposed development adds 34,836sqm of office spaces (stated in the planning application form) which equates to 2903 office workers (assuming 1:10 occupancy with a 80% utilisation) in the local area. This will put undue pressure on the existing public spaces.
- The Planning Brief for this site which was written by Camden Council and adopted in 2004 and is yet to be superseded states that the site should have an allocation of 50% housing to any increase in floor area. The Planning brief goes on to state that 50% of any new housing should be allocated as affordable housing. There is a proposed increase of 11,150sqm, in terms of direct comparison this would equate to 160 new two bed flats for the borough (according to the London Housing Design Guide Aug 2010)

To conclude, the building needs to be brought back into life in a way which enhances the local area for the benefit of tourists, shoppers, office workers and the local residents. At present the scheme responds very poorly to its surroundings causing a burden on local resources such as transport and local parks as well as being out of character with the adjacent conservations areas and Grade 1 listed building.

Yours faithfully,

Tom Hayes

View looking West towards Commonwealth House showing the dominating mass of the proposals over the surrounding buildings.

View as moving away from the British Museum along Museum Street.

Increased mass creates oppressive form out of scale with the neighbouring buildings.