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THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
The champion for Victorian and Edwardian architecture

Charles Thuaire
Senior Planning Officer
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
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WC1H 9JE
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Your reference: 2014/6845/P
Our reference: 2014C/11/016

8 December 2014

Dear Mr. Thuaire

RE: Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG relating to St. Stephens Church (Grade I, 1869-1873); application to demolish existing car park and erection of new seven storey building located on Heath Strange Garden site facing Hampstead Green (the "Pears Building")

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. We **object** to the proposed construction of the Pears Building on the grounds that it will substantially harm the setting of St. Stephens Church, a grade I listed building.

St. Stephens Church, Rosslyn Hill designed by Samuel Teulon is an impressive and mighty church built to accommodate an additional place of worship for the expanding population of Belsize Park and Hampstead. The church is a mature and powerful example of high-Victorian rogue architecture and is considered to be Teulon's masterpiece. In addition, in 2004 and then 2009 it was the subject of a multi-million pound repair and restoration contract funded in part from grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and the Wolfson Foundation.

Today, the church is located in direct proximity to the Royal Free Hospital separated only by Hampstead Green and the hospital's car park and patient gardens on the other side of Rowland Hill Street. Both St. Stephens Church and Hampstead Green are included in the Hampstead conservation area. The low-lying spaces of Hampstead Green and the hospital are vital as they provide a visual delineation between St. Stephens Church and the hospital. Both structures make strong architectural statements that do not complement each other. However, the current green spaces provide a physical break between the two allowing for St. Stephens Church to be seen on its own terms separate from the hospital. In particular, the striking west tower is beautiful when viewed against the blue sky.

The construction of the Pears Building is concerning for two reasons. First, it necessarily requires the loss of the low-lying car park and patient gardens. Thus, the clear division between the two structures will be lost. Secondly, the construction of such a large building means that any view of St. Stephens Church will include that of

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the Pears Building. The destruction of these views will cause substantial harm to the setting of St. Stephens Church.

Therefore, we recommend that the application is **refused**. I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Sarah L. Caradec

Conservation Adviser