

Maxwell Trautman

7 Lakis Close

NW3 1JX

January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

London Borough of Camden, Development Management

London Wc1H 8ND

For the Attention of Rob Tulloch

Reference 2014/7778/P

Dear Sir,

I write to you to strongly object to the proposed development at 6 Streatley Place, your application reference 2014/7778/P

I own the property, 7 Lakis Close, directly abutting 6 Streatley Place. My roof deck, rear garden and one bedroom window are immediately adjacent to 6 Streatley Place. In the 12 years that my family and I have lived here we have enjoyed the quiet amenities of our property undisturbed by 6 Streatley Place. This is due to the fact that 6 Streatley Place was used for business equipment and document storage purposes. Thus, there was little to no activity on weekends and it was secure and quiet at night.

The new owners now propose to erect a three storey boutique hotel on the property. If successful, the new hotel property will have a constant turnover of transient occupants who unlike my other neighbours have no connection to me or even the surrounding community. What is to stop them from walking 4 metres from the new hotel's common gathering place and peering into my bedroom window at night. Or sitting on their new roof deck that looks down on mine and staying up all hours of the night playing noisy music disturbing children's sleep on school nights? Not just my children but all the ones that live adjacent in Streatley Flats as well. Normally, neighbours have an incentive to modify behaviour, if necessary, in order to peacefully coexist with others in the neighbourhood. Unsociable behaviour can be addressed by conversation and negotiation between neighbours or even law enforcement if necessary. However, a transient occupant of this new hotel knows he is gone in a few days and has no such restraints on his behaviour. I fear this new hotel development will seriously impair our right to the quiet enjoyment of our amenities and even a good night's sleep when the occasional "bad actors" occupy the hotel.

I also am afraid that a successful application and development into a hotel will affect the security aspects of my property. If change of use permission is granted, I would then be relying on the new property owners to monitor the identity of the constantly changing occupants of a transient nature. Unlike a landlord of a normal residential rental property who can choose his tenant and ask for references, a hotel owner just wants to take an ID number and a deposit and hand over the keys

despite what they say about carefully selecting guests. They need to keep generating revenue due to the high cost of maintaining a hotel and the associated fixed marketing costs.

### **Issues of Development Policy**

Under DP14 (f) in the Camden Development Policies 2010-2045, it states that “All visitor accommodation must not harm the balance and mix of uses in the area, local character, residential amenity etc.” Surely, for the reasons discussed above, this new hotel will disturb the use of mine and others residential amenity space.

Further, under DP14 of Camden Development Policies 2010-2045, it says that the Council will support tourism development and visitor accommodation by “allowing smaller scale visitor accommodation in the town centres of Camden Town, Kilburn, West Hampstead, Kentish Town and Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage.” No. 6 Streatley Place is not located in any of these town centres. Paragraph (c) does say that the Council will support tourism development outside these areas that have a specialist focus, but this refers to tourist attractions like museums and notable places like Keats House in Hampstead. This surely does NOT refer to visitor accommodation. DP14 describes, in black and white, tourism development and visitor accommodation as separate concepts and guides for small scale visitor accommodation to be located in very specific places.

In the Camden Planning Guidance CPG6 Amenity, section 7 “Overlooking, Privacy and Outlook”

Section 7.3 states that

*Policy DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours* of the Camden Development Policies outlines how the Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity.

Section 7.4 states that

“Development should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings to a reasonable degree. Spaces that are overlooked lack privacy. Therefore, new buildings, extensions, roof terraces, balconies and the location of new windows should be carefully designed to avoid overlooking.”

It goes on to say,

#### **“WHAT IS GOOD PRACTICE?”**

To ensure privacy, there should normally be a minimum distance of 18m between the windows of habitable rooms of different units that directly face each other. This minimum requirement will be the distance between the two closest points on each building (including balconies).”

This proposed hotel development will have windows and glass doors within a few metres of my bedroom window, and rear garden.

## Misleading statements in the Applicant's Design and Access Statement:

In the Applicant's "Design and Access Statement" there is frequent reference to pre application consultation meetings with Camden Planning. The Applicant also submitted a planning pre-application ENQ01579. The Camden response was *'There is no objection in principle to the proposed demolition of the existing structures and the erection of a new dwelling, as housing is the priority of the Council's Local Development Framework'*

In the Applicant's "Design and Access Statement" 1.3, "Project History" the Applicant closes the paragraph with the statement *"the client had initiated pre-application consultation with the London Borough of Camden over the suitability of the site for redevelopment into a residential dwelling."*

However, this application does NOT provide housing for Camden and it is not a development of a residential dwelling. It is an application to build hotel accommodation.

## Errors and Misleading Information in the Planning Application.

- 1) The "Proposed Site Plan" denotes my property as 5A Streatley Place, it is actually 7 Lakis Close. It further mislabels 7 Lakis Close in many other drawings. There is no place called 5A Streatley Place which is frequently denoted in the application's drawings.
- 2) In the Design and Access Statement 3.1 it is said *"a third storey studio is placed at the north western corner of the site offering the potential for views across the rooftops of Streatley Place."* In fact, it is views across the roof terrace of 7 Lakis Close which is my family's main amenity space. Furthermore, later on in the statement there are drawings that are wildly inaccurate regarding the relationship of my house and roof terrace to the development site. These are misleading and prejudicial to the decision process.
- 3) The Design and Access Statement 3.2 "Relationship to Context" describes all the neighbouring architecture except mine? Why is this? It describes buildings over 100 metres away but not the building that most closely abuts the development site.
- 4) The Design and Access Statement 3.6 "Views" lays out the effort to avoid overlooking Streatley Place Cottages but no mention of the proposed living room / dining room with glass doors within 4 meters on one of my bedroom windows and the overlook and invasion of privacy there?
- 5) The Design and Access Statement 4.2 "Neighbour Consultation" states that Living Architecture has consulted with the owners of neighbouring properties. I am an owner of a neighbouring property, in fact the closest neighbouring property, and I have never been consulted.
- 6) The Design and Access Statement 4.3 "Planning History" states that there has only been one previous application made at the proposed development site. This is untrue. Application PWX0103931/R1 was made and approved on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002. This application was to convert the site to a garden annex to 7 Lakis Close. It was approved with conditions. Condition 5 stated that the site shall NOT be used as a separate or independent dwelling unit and referenced EN1, EN19 and EN31 in the Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000 as reasons for the conditions. EN19 and EN31 raise issues of "Amenity for Neighbours and Occupiers" while EN31 raise issues of "Character and Appearance of Conservation Areas." While the Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000 has since been superseded by new

development planning strategies for Camden, I do not believe Camden's planning policy on these particular issues have changed. The applicants claim that in pre planning consultations with Camden they were told ***"there is no objection in principle to the proposed demolition of the existing structures and the erection of a new dwelling."*** But Camden did previously object to a new dwelling back in 2002 as stated in PWX 0103931/R1. What changed from the Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000 to the new Camden Core Strategy 2010 to bring about this change in attitude?

- 7) The Design and Access Statement 4.4.1 "Principle of Development" This section references DP14 as support for the application. DP14 supports "Tourist Development" in some sense but DP14 uses specific language when describing "Visitor Accommodation" which is what this application is about. DP14 allows for small scale development of visitor accommodation in a list of specific town centres. Hampstead is NOT one of them. The applicant's claim is that this development provides some sort of tourist experience because the interior design will theme Constable, Keats and Freud. How does one do that? Hanging Constable reprints on the walls or books on the shelf written by Keats or something to that effect? This is a bit of a stretch calling that a tourist development. The applicant does highlight the experience of modern architecture in the Application. But this is a Conservation area. This is not the appropriate place to highlight Modern Architecture. The proposed architecture has nothing to do with Freud and Constable either. Freud lived in a Georgian Manor and Constable in a row house.
- 8) The Design and Access Statement 4.4.2 " Use of the Proposed Development" this section tries to address the difficulty of imposing a hotel business in the heart of a quiet densely inhabited residential neighbourhood. The Applicant claims that the guests will be bound by strict terms and conditions to discourage bad behaviour. But this is something all hotels big and small routinely do. It does not change the fact that this residential neighbourhood will be at risk of unusual transient behaviour that it never was exposed to before. This is especially true of my property where the constantly changing hotel guests will be just a few metres away from a bedroom window and will overlook my main amenity space.
- 9) The Design and Access Statement has two drawings of aerial views of the proposed development. They are very misleading. Especially when it comes to the relationship of my property to the development site. The drawings show 7 Lakis Close and its roof terrace as only partially overlapping 6 Streatley Place when in fact, they substantially overlap. They depict the 7 Lakis Close roof terrace as a quarter of its actual size! This can mislead the Planning Officers understanding of how much overlooking this proposed development will entail.

#### **Comments on the Tree Survey:**

The Applicant's Tree Survey categorizes two 20+ metre tall sycamore trees, that the applicant wishes to remove, as Category "B" trees. In the words of the report, they are described as having life expectancy of at least 20 plus more years. These trees are also described as having arboricultural qualities and more importantly, material conservation or cultural value. In fact, Category "B" trees in the words of the Tree Survey are not the highest Category "A" due to remedial defects or unsympathetic past management. In other words, with some remedial care they could be improved to Category "A" trees. The development site lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area and thus these trees should be maintained in any development proposal. In fact, Camden Council recently

granted planning permission (2013/1713/P) to demolish the old sheds on the development site and remove most of the trees. However, 2013/1713/P imposed a condition that the sycamore tree, labeled T10 on the Applicant's Tree Survey, be retained. The Applicant now proposes to remove this very tall (25+ metres) mature tree as well. To be consistent with the Camden's recent decision on the same property, at a minimum, the development should be required to keep this sycamore tree (T10 on the Tree Survey). It is readily visible from and provides shade to the public walkway that is Streatley Place.

### **Consultees for the Application**

This planning application lists seven Consultees. However, the Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee (HCAAC) is not consulted. This is strange as in the two previous planning applications on this very same site, the most recent one only 11 months ago, Camden asked the HCAAC for consultation. Is this an error of process for considering development at this site?

### **Objection**

So to conclude, I would hope that you deny permission for this proposed hotel development for the myriad reasons cited above. I am pleased that the new owners want to maintain the site. Although it has been locked and secured, it has not been maintained for many years. There is a badly listing retaining wall that I believe is dangerous to neighbouring properties should it give way as there is a very large lime tree at the top of the wall. However, a boutique hotel with its boundaries so close to bedroom windows in the neighbourhood and its height rising a full two stories above my roof terrace, which is my primary amenity space (as acknowledged by the council in the Officer's Report for planning decision 2013/1713/P) in such close proximity is a grossly out of character development in the Hampstead Conservation Area. As far as I am aware, there is only one small hotel in all of the Hampstead Town centre. It is located right on the busy Heath Street in conjunction with a restaurant. The proprietor of the hotel has staff on site 24 hours a day. It does not interfere with any residential amenity space either. The proposed development of a small hotel at 6 Streatley Place would set a precedent I fear and may open the door to other small hotels in the Hampstead Town centre. Camden Planning guidelines are clear on where short term visitor accommodation should be located. I strongly object and hope that Camden will be consistent with past decisions on this very same site and reject the application to convert the property into hotel accommodation with structural boundaries so close to my private amenity spaces and bedroom windows. A smaller two bedroom residential cottage with the amenity space located in the NW corner avoiding overlook and privacy issues with neighbours would be a much more suitable development proposal.

Sincerely,

Maxwell Trautman

Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000

EN1 Insure no adverse impact on the amenity

EN13 Insure high standards of deign

EN19 Loss of privacy

EN31 Subjective ...design and materials