



Dear Mr Thuaire

Planning Application 2014/6845/P Royal Free Hospital

As a local resident living in Hampstead Hill Gardens, I object to the Royal Free Hospital's application for the following reasons:

Substantial harm to St Stephen's (Grade 1 listed) and Hampstead Green.

The Heath Strange Memorial Garden, built over the low level car park, provides an important green space that distances St Stephen's and Hampstead Green from the ugly 1970s Royal Free building.

It is essential to keep this physical break between these the two strongly opposing architectural styles: namely, the high Victorian splendour of St Stephen's and the 16-storey 1970s 'brutalist' Royal Free.

St Stephen's is considered to be a neo-gothic masterpiece and the finest of all Teulon's 114 churches. Building on the Heath Strange Garden, the only green space in the entire Royal Free massive site will ruin the setting for both St Stephen's and Hampstead Green. Important and much loved views of St Stephen's and Hampstead Green will be lost forever.

A 7-storey building, squashed right up against Hampstead Green will completely dominate it. Deprived of light and space, this jewel of a meadow, with its wild flowers and mature trees, will just become part of the hospital site and the setting for St Stephen's will be lost. Hampstead Green should never lose its railings and must not be open to the public, who have the wide spaces of Hampstead Heath nearby.

This much loved enclave, reminiscent of 'old Hampstead' makes an important contribution to the character and heritage of this part of Hampstead and should be retained as a balance to the ugly Royal Free building. The only visual positive of the Royal Free building is that it is set back from Haverstock Hill and does not ruin too many views.

This jewel of an enclave must be retained. The feeling of wellbeing that this enclave generates and the important role that we now know this plays in the prevention of many illnesses must surely be taken into account, particularly in this planning application.

The planning department must ask themselves if they would pass the existing Royal Free building without the green space provided by The Heath Strange Garden. It's obvious that they would not and therefore they should not consider an application to build a 7-storey building on it.

The Heath Strange Memorial Garden, apart from providing a green space and distance from the hospital, could with minimal investment, become a beautiful garden in its own right, perhaps echoing the wild meadow grasses and flowers of Hampstead Green. It has a sizeable number of mature trees, most of which would be lost in the proposed development. Also, with very little investment, the side of the Royal Free viewed from Haverstock Hill could be improved with screening, such as vertical planting.

Hampstead Hill School would be badly affected by the Pears Building. Classrooms will be deprived of light and very young kindergarten children will be overlooked when at play. The construction process will be intolerable for the children and staff.

No need for a Hotel and Charity Offices

There is no need for a hotel, when the exceptionally well run and cost effective Premier Inn at a distance of only 0.2 miles could not be closer or more convenient.

I stayed at the Premier Inn many times before moving to Hampstead and I can tell you that all of the Royal Free patients that I spoke to at the Premier Inn were very happy staying there. Without wanting to sound like Lenny Henry, the hotel is extremely comfortable and the staff could not be nicer or more caring.

Also I don't think that offices, even offices for the Royal Free Charity, should be built on such a sensitive site. There must be many alternative sites to house the offices, which are relatively easy to locate.

Loss of Parking

Reducing the existing parking spaces by almost 50%, in a planning application to build a 7-storey building with hotel, stretches credulity. This is not to mention the extra demands on parking that the increase in A&E capacity from 60,000 to 140,000 will bring.

The planning application talks about providing additional cycle parking and showers as a solution and attempts to justify the reduction in parking spaces by stating that it will encourage the greater use of public transport. This is all fine and good, but as a local resident, all I see is people wanting to travel to the hospital in the comfort of a car, which is understandable if you are ill or if your loved one is ill. If you need to visit A&E, you are often in no condition to hop on your bike, jump on a bus, or manage the stairs on the underground.

Parking at the Royal Free is already totally inadequate, with large numbers of Blue Badge holders parking in residents' bays, making it impossible for residents to find a parking space.

Increase in traffic. The building of a 7-storey building with hotel and reducing the existing parking by almost 50%, can only make an already bad traffic situation worse and then there is the additional traffic that will be generated by the huge increase in A&E capacity from 60,000 to 140,000.

I must say that I was shocked when I only recently found out that what I thought were some internal alterations and improvement to the existing A&E facility, actually increases the capacity from 60,000 to 140,000. I don't remember this being mentioned in the planning application for the A&E internal alterations and I think the planning department needs to look into this as a matter of urgency. It looks as though there has been a gross omission in the planning application.

The increase in traffic and parking requirements that the A&E expansion will generate needs to be examined and taken into account when assessing the current application. It seems that we hear almost every

week in the news, that A&E numbers are increasing dramatically at all the large London hospitals and I'm sure the Royal Free is no exception to this.

Congestion on Pond Street will be made worse by the closure of the link road to Rowland Hill Street, which will force all vehicles dropping off patients and visitors at the main entrance to use the Pond Street exit.

Add to this the extra traffic caused by visitors circling the local roads looking for parking spaces and double parking whilst they wait for a space. Congestion is going to become intolerable; emergency ambulances will be delayed, accidents will be caused and air quality will suffer.

Construction lasting two years will bring damage and disruption. The deep excavations may cause substantial damage to St Stephen's and the inevitable dust, noise and pollution, will be harmful to the young children attending Hampstead Hill School. The construction process will also badly impact on parking and traffic congestion.

I believe that there are two other major developments taking place very close to the Royal Free site at the same time as this planned construction. The cumulative impact of these other large building projects must be taken into account when assessing this application.

No Master Plan. I think it's disgraceful that there is no master plan for the entire Royal Free site accompanying this proposal for such a large building. For example, what effect will the recent merger with Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals make and what opportunities are there to move facilities to these locations, to relieve the pressure on the Royal Free.

Even before this planning application, the Royal Free site is badly overdeveloped and a master plan is needed to help planners come up with the right decision and to keep the public informed.

Medical Research. I'm very supportive of the great work that the Royal Free does and for a world-class research facility, but unfortunately this is not the right building and certainly not the right site for it.

I'm sure alternative solutions can be found to enable the new research facility to go ahead.

For example, could space be found within the existing Royal Free building for those few researchers that need to have constant access to patients and treatment and a suitable site found for the major new research building? Could Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals provide a site? Could some facilities be transferred from the Royal Free to Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals to relieve pressure on the Royal Free and to release space for work in connection with the new research facility?

For all these reasons I request that this planning application be refused.

Yours sincerely

Jack Turner

Hampstead Hill Gardens