

Attn Rob Tulloch  
Regeneration and Planning Development  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd St  
WC1H 8ND

17 January 2015

Dear Sir,  
Planning Application 2014/7778/P: 6 Streatley Place NW3 1HL

I wish to object to the above application on the following grounds.

The applicant seeks to develop an area of open land currently occupied by a few derelict buildings. However, the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (p.58) states that such open spaces are valuable: *pressure for backland development can reduce the quality of the visual as well as the ecological environment*. This is particularly true in this case, as the site is hemmed in by residential properties and fronts onto a narrow passageway.

The applicant refers to a previous application made in June 2014, when Camden stated there was no objection to the conversion of the land in question for a residential use. But as shown above, this is contrary to the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement. Furthermore, the 2014 application was for a conservatory and garden, which is very different to what is currently being proposed, namely a 3 storey modern building, brought forward to the property boundary formed by the wall to Streatley Place. Its bulk also represents an overdevelopment of the site.

The proposed building does not sit comfortably in its surroundings, which for the most part comprise Victorian properties. There are many examples of good modern buildings in Hampstead as the applicant has pointed out, but this design is out of keeping and out of scale for the neighbourhood. As noted in the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (H22): *'new development has not always taken account of the area's history and its context. Modern architectural design will not be resisted per se but it should be considerate to its context.'* The design takes little note of the two neighbouring blocks of New Court which are Grade II listed.

The proposed development is intended to be used as short term 'holiday' accommodation. This is an unsuitable use for a site located in the middle of a densely populated residential area. The Applicant's Design Statement 4.4.2 notes that *'visitors would be bound by strict terms and conditions to discourage any behaviour which may be detrimental to the area or neighbouring properties.'* The choice of the word 'discourage', in other words, trying to prevent something unpleasant happening, is hardly comforting for the many residents who could be disturbed by the antisocial behaviour of visitors, having no commitment to the neighbourhood. In practice, given that clause 6.1 states the period of stay will be 3 days to two weeks, this

covenant will be impossible to enforce. By the time the managing company has been alerted to and acted to prevent antisocial behaviour, the perpetrator will probably have left.

The proposed high stepped wall to Streatley Place is far more aggressive than currently exists and towers over the footway, exacerbating the already canyon like feeling of this narrow pedestrian way. The Hampstead Conservation Area statement (H10) states '*proposals should respect the original style of boundary and these should be retained or reinstated.*' At present, a pedestrian walking up Streatley Place towards Heath Street is met with an open view of sky, trees and a few low buildings (as shown by the photo on p.10 of the Design Statement), rather than the overpowering bulk of the proposed new build, (as amply demonstrated by the photos on p.20 & p.26 of the Design Statement).

Rather than the many blank windows lending an '*air of mystery*', (Applicant's Design Statement 3.6) they imbue the building with a walled-up and sealed-off appearance. This building is not seeking to be part of the neighbourhood, but turning its back on Hampstead. In the eighteenth century, the introduction of window tax in England led to windows being bricked up to avoid payment. Then, blank embrasures were not seen as positive but as negative additions to properties.

3.3 of the Applicant's Design Statement claims the building aims to minimise '*impact on neighbouring properties. Its massing is therefore composed to offer views and provide privacy for both residents and near neighbours*'. I have already mentioned the impact of the stepped wall. Streatley Flats on Streatley Place immediately opposite the proposed development will suffer severe overlooking as will some flats in New Court and number 7 Lakis Close. The mention in the Design Statement of tree screening will have minimal effect in winter.

Access to the site is very difficult and has not been fully addressed by the applicant. There is no vehicular access: Streatley Place is a pedestrian walkway leading eastwards from the junction of Back Lane and Heath Street. It is used by many pupils and parents as their route to New End School. The suggested use of Boades Mews as a '*site compound*', presumably to contain materials, is completely unacceptable. Boades Mews is another pedestrian walkway also much used by pupils attending New End School. It has residential accommodation along its eastern side and is a considerable distance from the proposed site, being located at the eastern and further end of Streatley Place. Concerning the neighbouring streets, namely Flask Walk leading to Back Lane. Beyond the green on Flask Walk as far as the junction of Back Lane and Heath Street, both roads are narrow and carry single lane traffic only, with no entry from Heath Street. They provide emergency access for residents and it is essential they remain unobstructed. Camden Council is in the process of installing width restriction signs.

In conclusion, I would like to draw Camden's attention to the numerous and inexcusable historical and naming errors in the Applicant's Design Statement. The applicant consistently refers to the (2) large blocks of flats bordering the site as 'Streatley Flats', their correct name is New Court. Streatley Flats **do** exist, a small block on the opposite side of Streatley Place. But the applicant refers to this building as 'Streatley Cottages'. Boades Mews is called 'Boades Mews'. 5a Streatley Place is actually 5a Back Lane. Such consistent errors, in both text and on the plans, may well confuse and prevent residents from understanding, commenting or objecting to the proposal.

As a local historian of some years standing, I close with my comments on the following extract from the Applicant's Design Statement. It is a flawed piece of research containing many errors, and as such, I suggest it reflects large gaps in the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the neighbourhood. This casts considerable doubt on the Applicant's Design Statement's assertion, 4.4.3, *'the proposal has been designed to respond to the character and history of the Conservation Area*, as the applicant has demonstrated a lamentable lack of knowledge so far as the environs of Streatley Place are concerned.

### 3.2

The immediate context of Streatley Place is made up of buildings of various types constructed over a period covering the last two hundred years. Towards the bottom of Streatley Place lies the Victorian Workhouse. The majority of the buildings that make up the workhouse date from the late 19th century and are in a typically eclectic range of styles that include elements of Gothic, Baroque and Italianate architecture. Related to the Workhouse is Mansfield Place, a short terrace of worker's cottages fronted by gardens accessed from Streatley Place.

*My comment:* The Victorian workhouse covered the area north of Streatley Place as far as and fronting New End. It ceased to be a workhouse in 1915, becoming first a military hospital and then New End Hospital. The eminent commentator on architecture Sir Nicklaus Pevsner, describes the main building as a *'detailed, classical composition'*, with no mention of Baroque, Gothic or Italianate features. Mansfield Place had nothing to do with the Workhouse; the cottages were started in 1859 as a private building speculation.

Immediately to the north of the site lies Streatley Flats, two large blocks of apartments built in 1898 in a pared-back neo-Georgian manner. These buildings are faced in stock brick with red brick quoins, gauged arches and string courses.

*My comment:* The 2 blocks of Streatley Flats referred to above are in fact New Court (originally New Buildings), built in 1854-5 and 1871. This is a particularly muddled paragraph – as the real Streatley Flats still stand, opposite the applicant's site, and were built in 1898.

Along Streatley Place is a short row of two-storey cottages of typically mid-Victorian character constructed from London Stock Brick with white painted stucco detailing and timber sash windows.

*My comment:* There is no *'row of two storey cottages of typical mid-Victorian character'* in Streatley Place but rather a row of properties built in the 1990s when New End Hospital was converted to residential use. The Conservation area statement bluntly states: *'they attempt but fail to reflect the surrounding architecture.'*

For these reasons I request that Camden refuses permission for the current application.

Yours truly,



Dr Marianne Colloms