

Elizabeth Ruddick
1 Boades Mews
London NW3 1DB

18 January 2015

Dear Mr Tulloch,

RE: Objection to planning application 2014/7778/P

I live at 1 Boades Mews (not Boardes Mews, as repeatedly indicated in the proposal). My husband and I own the freehold of the property, and have lived there with our children for more than 10 years.

I now write to register my very strong objection to the plan to erect a working compound blocking the top of Boades Mews and for the delivery of materials to this location. We were not informed of this proposal by the council or the contractor, and it was only brought to our attention by a neighbour this afternoon. I therefore doubt that the council or the developer have complied with their legal duties of consultation in this matter.

I have now had sight of the proposal, and in particular of "Diagram B - Site Compound and Vehicle Access - Boardes [sic] Mews". I understand that the developer proposes to set up a compound for delivery and storage of building materials and a chemical toilet, surrounded by fixed hoardings, blocking almost all of the top of the footpath where Boades Mews meets New End.

I query whether anyone from the developer or the council can have observed the congestion in this area during the school run at the beginning and end of each school day. I have lived adjacent to the proposed compound, as stated above, for over ten years. For most of that time I was either a full-time parent or working freelance from home, so that I observed this almost every day. In addition, both of my children have attended New End School, so I participated

in the school run myself for many years. My objections to the scheme are thus based on many years of practical experience.

I would like to set out my reason for objecting strongly to this scheme:

1. Congestion

Flask Walk is one of two narrow routes from the High Street and from most public transport links to New End Primary School. Everyone who travels to the school via Flask Walk completes their journey by walking up Boades Mews. The junction of Flask Walk and Boades Mews is also where many children who are driven to school are dropped off; they then also walk up Boades Mews to school. Boades Mews thus has very heavy foot traffic twice a day, involving predominantly young children. As Streatley Place would itself be a construction site, and is already very narrow and congested during the school run, it is completely unrealistic to propose that any of the present foot traffic to the school could be rerouted through Streatley Place.

Your diagram B states that pedestrian access would be “maintained” through a narrow corridor between the compound and the garden opposite. This is untrue. Given the volume and type of foot traffic up and down Boades Mews, pedestrian access would not, as a practical matter, be maintained in any meaningful way through such a narrow corridor. It would be completely unsuitable for the volume and type of pedestrian traffic that passes every day.

New End is a primary school. The school runs thus involves children from the age of 11 down to nursery pupils of three and even younger siblings who are still in buggies. Many of the children come to school on scooters and some by bicycle or tricycle. Others are young and exuberant and make a practice of running on ahead down the footpath at the end of the school day. Most young children are naturally brought to school and picked up by a single adult, who may have two or more young children in their charge at the same time, and often a buggy in addition. For all of this traffic – toddlers, children, buggies, tricycles, bicycles and parents -- to squeeze through that narrow corridor in an orderly and safe manner would not be possible. I query whether even two buggies would fit down that corridor side by side at the same time. The children would inevitably back up into the street. This would not only be

stressful and inconvenient for the parents and the children, I believe it would also put the children at risk of harm from vehicle traffic. It must be remembered in this connection that at the same time the pedestrian traffic would be backing up into New End, other parents would be trying to pick up or drop off their children by car in exactly the same location.

2. Risks from siting a construction shed in an area heavily trafficked by young children

I also have concerns about the behaviour of young children around this construction shed as building materials are being moved in and out of it and at any time it is left unlocked, either by accident or while in use. I have personally witnessed numerous incidents of risk-taking behaviour by small children going to and coming from New End School. Recently, for example, a builder who was doing repairs to the outside of our property was startled by a young child leaving the school and trying to knock him off his ladder for fun. When building rubbish has been left in Boades Mews in the past, small children have played with, sticking their hands in old paint, for example, unaware of any possible health risks. We often find small children running ahead of their parents to hide amongst our dustbins. All of these children were accompanied by their parents, but in such a large crowd of children and with, as stated above, most parents responsible for more than one child, it is simply impossible to control all of their behaviour all of the time. Placing a compound full of building materials at the heart of a primary school run is asking for an accident to happen.

We note that the contractors make a general commitment not to deliver building materials during the school run. I do not think they can make a commitment not to access the compound throughout the school day. I fear that at some point during the building process, they will leave the compound door unlocked, and a serious accident may occur. I query why Camden would wish to take the responsibility of accepting such a risk by siting his compound in a footpath so heavily trafficked by small children.

3. Risks from constructing the compound where older children wait to be let into school.

The entrance to New End School for older children is in the wall of the New End School playground in Boades Mews itself, adjacent to your proposed compound. Children in years 5 and 6 often wait in Boades Mews for the gate to be opened in the morning. We have had repeated experiences in the past of children misbehaving while waiting for the gate to be

opened – banging on our windows as a “joke”, playing ball against our walls, climbing or banging on the telephone cable box in Boades Mews, etc. I would suggest that such behaviour by children of 10 and 11 is to be expected. I fear that should the construction compound be sited in Boades Mews, it will be what is called an “attractive nuisance” to these children – they will play games against the hoardings, climb on them, etc. This also creates a real risk of accident.

4. Current recreational use of Boades Mews

Outside of the school run, Boades Mews is used by local children for skateboarding, playing football, bicycling, etc. This is especially true of the top of the footpath, where you propose to site the compound. Your plan would deprive the local children of this playing space.

5. No firm commitment by the contractors to avoid risk and disruption during the school run.

I fear that the contractors have made only the vaguest commitments to avoid disruption during the school run. They propose to close off part of Streatley Place entirely, for example, at the beginning of the construction, and they make no commitment to do this during the school holidays, stating only that this might be during school holidays “Depending on the construction programme”. The compound itself will only be locked off “when not in use”, not, as would be necessary to maintain the children’s safety, at all times.

6. Nuisance to the residents of Boades Mews

As you are aware, Boades Mews is very narrow. Our home and the home of our neighbour directly adjoin the footpath, without any intervening pavement, garden, etc. The proposal is essentially, to erect storage space and a chemical toilet under our bedroom windows. The proposed compound would likely to be dirty, unsightly, and foul-smelling, and there would be considerable noise and disruption involved in the delivery of material to the compound and movement of materials in and out of it. This would interfere with our quiet enjoyment of our homes.

For all of the above reasons, I strongly object to this plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Elizabeth Ruddick