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Ms Susan Daniels  
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Mr Richard Mansell-Jones  
Dr Christopher Tadgell  
Mrs Catrin Treadwell

Neil McDonald  
London Borough of Camden Planning  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

26 January 2015

Dear Mr McDonald

**21-31 NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON, WC1A 1BA**  
**Application No 2014/5946/P**

World Monuments Fund Britain writes in reference to the above planning application, the development of the former sorting office at 21-31 New Oxford Street, to object to the current proposal during the statutory consultation period following the application amendments submitted on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2014.

The Grade I listed church of St George's Bloomsbury is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area directly opposite the proposed redevelopment site. In 2002 World Monuments Fund included St George's on the World Monuments Watch, the organisation's biennial advocacy programme for heritage at risk. St George's remains on WMF's global Watch list due to the historical significance of the site, its relationship to the Conservation Area and ongoing threats from new development in the area.

St George's is an internationally significant English Baroque masterpiece and an important part of our national heritage. It is often recognised as Hawksmoor's finest church, with the most eccentric spire in London. From 2002-2008, World Monuments Fund Britain undertook a £9.2 million conservation project to restore and repair the church, with the support of the estate of one of the world's greatest philanthropists, the late Paul Mellon, and counterpart support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other generous donors. Indeed, WMFB is still working in partnership with St George's on improvements to the south elevation on Bloomsbury Way.

Whilst not opposing the redevelopment of sites in the area, the current proposal is insensitive to the heritage assets in the immediate vicinity, namely St George's Church and accompanying listed buildings in Museum Street. Increasing the height and bulk of the building to rise above St George's steeple has a negative impact on sight lines of the Grade I listed building and does not respect the scale of the buildings in the surrounding conservation area. Additionally, the proposed design of the Museum Street elevation is not

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set back from the site boundary and therefore does not respect the historic views of St George's from Museum Street, in particular those from the southern half which reference the famous image of the church in Hogarth's 1751 engraving of Gin Lane.

WMF Britain would strongly encourage the council to revisit the current proposal to ensure that it fully respects the significance of the church and its historic environs, and the £9.2 million pound investment and heritage asset is secured for future generations.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Melissa Marshall'.

Melissa Marshall

Project Director, World Monuments Fund Britain