

---

# OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

## 2014/7710/P

### LAND TO THE REAR OF 128 AGAR ROAD, NW1 9TZ

---

#### Proposed Development

Planning application reference number 2014/7710/P, submitted by Bondminster, proposes the erection of a new house on land to the rear of 128 Agar Road. The proposed dwelling would face onto and be accessed via St Paul's Mews. The house would comprise a basement and ground floor, with associated roof terraces, garaging for one car and high perimeter walls to the front (south) of the property.

#### St Paul's Mews

It is important to note the established characteristics of St Paul's Mews. The 30 mews properties were constructed in 1987/8 pursuant to planning consent PL8701220 and comprise a gentle curve of townhouses, with two separate semi-detached properties at the gated western end.

The defining characteristics of the Mews are, inter alia: its uniformity, traditional design approach of high quality brick, timber and render, cobbled road with granite setts, consistent material palette, rear gardens, street frontage, courtyard car parking and street trees; all of which contribute to its character and appearance and make it a worthy addition to the conservation area within which it sits.

#### Grounds of Objection

##### (i) Loss of Car parking

The proposed development would result in the loss of six car parking spaces contrary condition 2 on the original consent which states "*The garages and parking spaces shall be retained and used for the accommodation of private motor vehicles only and no trade or business shall be carried on therefrom*". The reason for the condition is as follows: "*Any other use of the garages and parking spaces would be prejudicial to the amenities of the residential buildings and the area generally*".

The loss of the car parking spaces would lead to a shortfall of provision for the 30 dwellings in the Mews, contrary to the original consent. The scheme was designed to provide one car parking space per property, thereby providing an adequate level of provision on-site and preventing overspill onto surrounding residential roads.

The loss of six spaces would be prejudicial to the amenities of the Mews properties and the area generally, contrary to Policy DP18 *Parking standards and limiting the availability of parking*. The policy seeks to control the level of car parking in new developments in Low Parking Provision Areas, such as town centres. St Paul's Mews is not located within a town centre and is not designated as a CPZ. Furthermore, it has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 2-3, which is very low. Accordingly, it is appropriate to maintain existing car parking levels.

## **(ii) Impact on Trees**

Whilst there are no trees within the application site, four trees (two Limes, one Maple and one Sycamore) sit very close to the boundary of the site and will be affected by the proposed development, specifically the construction of the basement. The trees are protected as they fall within a conservation area.

T1 (Lime) and T4 (Sycamore) are both B grade trees which make a valuable contribution to the setting of St Paul's Mews and the rear gardens of Agar Road, given their height of 21m and 16m respectively. The arboricultural report submitted with the planning application makes assumptions about the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of both these trees which have not been verified through proper site investigations. For example, the report assumes that both RPAs have grown away from the subject site in response to a previous change in levels and the construction of the retaining wall around the car park. The RPA of T1 is shown as being entirely off-centre and outside the application site, which is unsupported by any evidence.

The proposed basement will cut further down into the RPAs of these two trees and seriously undermine their life expectancy. The basement will also cut through the RPAs of T2 and T3 and compromise their longevity.

The tightness of the application site means that there is no opportunity for mitigation planting.

The impact of the proposed development on neighbouring trees is wholly unacceptable and renders the scheme contrary to Policy CS15 and CPG8.

## **(iii) Impact on Ecology**

Not only will the proposed development undermine the future of those trees identified, but it will result in the removal of a significant amount of boundary vegetation. Again, given the constrained nature of the site, there is no opportunity for mitigation planting. The scheme will therefore have a direct negative impact on biodiversity contrary to Policy CS15.

## **(iv) Impact on the Camden Square Conservation Area**

The application site falls within the Camden Square Conservation Area, following an extension of the conservation area in 2002. It is considered that the St Paul's Mews makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the different architectural styles throughout the conservation area, largely reflecting the different periods of development. It notes that the uniformity of such groups is an important characteristic of the area. The proposed basement and ground floor dwelling would undermine the uniformity of the Mews. It would create a different style of dwelling, which would be at odds with the defining characteristics of the Mews, as identified above.

The proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area and would therefore conflict with Policy DP25 *Conserving Camden's heritage*.

## **(v) Inappropriate Design**

The design approach of the proposed dwelling has no regard for the context of the site and its location within St Paul's Mews. The Mews properties are 3 storey townhouses with a clear and consistent design approach, unlike the proposed dwelling, which manifests itself as a single storey property, hidden behind a perimeter wall. As such, the property will make no contribution to the established design approach of the Mews.

In isolation, the dwelling may be regarded as high quality, but it does not result in the creation of a high quality place. The building does not create an attractive environment, nor integrate with existing buildings and uses around it. The application is therefore contrary to Policy CS14 *Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage*.

Furthermore, the proposed development is contrary to Policy DP24 *Securing high quality design* as it is at odds with the character, setting, context, form and scale of neighbouring buildings on St Paul's Mews and Agar Grove.

#### **(vi) Impact on Residential Amenity**

The proposed dwelling would result in unneighbourly development given its proximity to existing properties on St Paul's Mews, less than 10m from the façade of some properties. Whilst properties in the Mews do not have ground floor living accommodation, the proximity is considered unacceptable for first and second floor habitable rooms which would be visible from each of the courtyards and void spaces proposed within the dwelling.

The proposed dwelling would not protect the quality of life of neighbours and would lead to loss of privacy and overlooking.

The proposed garaging, behind automatic gates, would lead to manoeuvrings within metres of existing residential properties.

Accordingly, it is considered that the dwelling would conflict with Policy DP26 *Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours* and Policy CPG6.

#### **Conclusion**

In summary, there are substantive planning objections to the proposed development and conflict with adopted policies within the Core Strategy, Development Management Policies and Camden Planning Guidance. The scheme will result in significant harm to interests of acknowledged importance and accordingly, planning permission should be refused.

**Louise Morton**  
**Quadrant Town Planning**  
**11<sup>th</sup> February 2015**