Gloucester Avenue Association

102 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8HX

[redacted]

5 March 2015

Dear Michael,

44-44A Gloucester Avenue

I am writing to object to the current plans for 44-44A Gloucester Avenue on three grounds.

1. ***Pollution***

It is clear that these buildings have a long history of industrial use. They were used as a telegraphic works from 1858; in 1871 it was used for making and repairing batteries. The overall use of the building for industrial purposes, however, remains unclear and this must raise doubts about the suitability of using the buildings for residential purposes. In our opinion, it is inconceivable that well over a hundred years of engineering and chemical usage did not lead to significant industrial pollution.

2. ***Traffic***

We do not believe that the impact of the increased residential traffic is acceptable, particularly in the light of the future threat to Camden's traffic flows posed by HS2.

3. Heritage

The building is close to and controls possible emergency access to the Grade II* Listed Stationary Winding Vaults. It is incumbent of Camden to protect the future of such an important building, including access to it. In this the Gloucester Avenue Association strongly supports the position of the Camden Railway Heritage Trust.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Sheppard

Chairman
The Gloucester Avenue Association

Michael Cassidy
Department of Planning
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

From: Cassidy, Michael
Sent: 17 March 2015 15:41
To: Planning
Subject: FW: 44-44A Gloucester Avenue, planning application 2015/0462/P
Attachments: Scudamore report 1871 007.jpg; Scudamore report 1871 006.jpg

Please could you upload this objection onto application 2014/0462/P.

Thanks,

Michael

Michael Cassidy
Principal Planner
Regeneration and Planning
Culture and Environment
London Borough of Camden

Telephone: 0207 974 5666
Web: camden.gov.uk

5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

From: Peter Darley [redacted]
Sent: 05 March 2015 16:57
To: Cassidy, Michael
Subject: 44-44A Gloucester Avenue, planning application 2015/0462/P

Dear Michael

I would like to respond more formally to planning application 2015/0462/P:

First I wish to address the question of contaminated land. The previous planning application approved at appeal did not address this question, maintaining

The industrial buildings were used as warehouse and office accommodation for the business (Heritage Statement, 2010/6627/P) .

This is as far as the investigation of the industrial activities carried out at the site goes.

I would like to set the stage by quoting from my book "Camden Goods Station Through Time":

In 1846 the Electric and International Telegraph Company, which owned the Cooke and Wheatstone patents, was incorporated for public telegraphic communications using railway routes as corridors for the overhead lines. Their Gloucester Road works, built in 1858, housed an extensive factory carrying out a great variety of skilled operations. The company was nationalised and taken over by the Post Office in 1870. The single storey building facing Gloucester Road was replaced by the present three-storey building in c1871.

There is more information on the factory operations in the Scudamore Report of 1871, which describes reorganisation post nationalisation. I attach the two pages of this report that relate directly to the site in subject.
I provided this report to Camden when I was asked for historical information, to be used to defend the refusal of the application. The applicant now considers:

The planning application that was previously submitted and approved at appeal under application reference: APP/X5210/A/11/2161885 did not include a Contamination Desktop Report and therefore it is not considered that a report will be required in this instance as it was agreed not to be a material issue in the determination of the appeal (Cover Letter).

No attempt appears to have been made by the applicant to obtain information on the industrial processes undertaken on site either before nationalisation, as documented in the Scudamore Report, or post nationalisation. I do not have information on how the site evolved after nationalisation, and have never sought such information. But, in the absence of information, a precautionary stance should be taken. We already know about battery manufacture and the repair of old batteries from the Scudamore Report. There must be a strong possibility that a number of other processes would have involved noxious substances.

Unless and until it is reasonably proven otherwise, Camden Railway Heritage Trust objects to the application because of the potential hazard of contaminated land.

Second, I would like to address the heritage issue. It is stated:

There is no significant effect on the setting of any listed building – notably the nearby public house (Heritage Statement, 2010/6627/P).

The Heritage Statement also refers to *nearby listed buildings (primarily The Engineer Public House (Grade II) & the Primrose Hill Primary School (Grade II).*

There has never been any mention in the series of planning applications submitted by the developer of the Grade II* listed stationary winding engine vaults. These are closer to the site than either the Engineer or Primrose Hill School. Their omission in the 2010 application may simply have been due to incompetence, but the applicant will have been alerted to their existence by the responses of Network Rail and CRHT, and by the Discussion Paper "Restoration of the Stationary Winding Vaults, June 2014, which was handed to the developer at a meeting on 11 July 2014. It is clear that the applicant believes that permitted development orders allow him/her to ignore this remarkable feature of Camden's rich railway heritage.

The vaults are of international importance for their historical and technological significance. They were listed at Grade II in June 1990 and raised to Grade II* in April 2010 following a successful application by Camden Railway Heritage Trust. They are a survivor of the London and Birmingham Railway (L&BR), the first of all modern main line railways with a London terminus. The L&BR opened to Boxmoor from Euston on 20 July 1837 and to Birmingham on 17 September 1838. The winding engine vaults represent, as one of the very last uses of rope haulage on a public railway, a relatively brief transitional stage in the technological development of railway transportation. Their architectural interest lies in the grand scale and unique design of their underground brick construction.

The most important issue to be addressed is the safeguarding of the means of access/escape to the winding vaults, and thereby the safeguarding of the potential for restoration and reuse of this exceptional structure. In this respect, the historic former electric telegraph works at 44-44A Gloucester Avenue provide the last opportunity to safeguard a service/escape route to the winding vaults on their western side. This would be through the building at the south-eastern end of the

Courtyard, adjacent to No. 42 Gloucester Avenue and backing onto the rail side. It is currently shown in the application as a single storey in B8 use, exactly as existing. For an access/escape route two basement floors, a staircase and a lift would need to be incorporated.

The utilities to be provided for any restoration of the vaults would include potable water, wastewater, electricity, and communications. It is envisaged that all of these services would be routed from Gloucester Avenue, and combined with the escape route from the vaults. This route could also be used for servicing the vaults, using the lift in the access shaft for movement of heavier loads.

Whatever the permitted development rights under new government legislation, it must be in Camden's interest to safeguard the potential of such a valuable heritage asset. If the planning authority fails in this, it will deprive future residents and visitors of a unique opportunity. We call on the parties involved, developer, Network Rail and LBC, to show some imagination so that all parties may benefit.

Peter Darley
Secretary
Camden Railway Heritage Trust

When all the improvements which are in progress have been completed, and they are advancing fast towards completion, I believe that the Telegraph system of this country will be as perfect as it can be made.

The Gloucester Road Stores and Workshops.

Prior to the transfer, and immediately after it had taken place, we were compelled by the urgency and magnitude of our requirements to entrust much work to manufacturers, which Mr. Culley would have preferred to have given to our own workshops. We inherited from the Electric and International Company an extensive factory in Gloucester Road, Camden Town, and in that factory we now carry on a great variety of operations which make us to a great extent independent of manufacturers. The following description of the work done at the Gloucester Road Stores has been prepared for me by Mr. Johnston.

"The work carried on there may be divided into two classes, viz., that relating to all kinds of apparatus in use in our telegraph offices, and that relating to all kinds of line and construction work. The former is carried on by skilled mechanics, of whom there are about 70, including apprentices, employed; and the latter by workmen especially trained for it, and by ordinary telegraph labourers, of whom the number at present employed is 105. In the first class of work the following are the most important items, viz., the remaking and repair of all kinds of instruments, the manufacture of translator boards, the winding of coils, and the examination and testing of all apparatus supplied by manufacturers under contract with the Department. As regards the repair of instruments, it frequently happens that apparatus which might otherwise have fallen into disuse from wear and tear, or from some electrical defect or other, is made equal to new on being sent into the factory; and there is this important advantage of having an establishment of the kind under the immediate eye of the Department, that the improvements in apparatus which *practical working* has shown to be necessary or desirable can be tested and carried out with the least possible delay, and at the least possible cost. For instance, on a recent occasion it was found necessary to have a number of Morse printing instruments adapted for fast speed, in order to apply the automatic arrangement to the transmission of news over the more important press wires. Under ordinary circumstances new instruments would have had to be supplied; but through the ingenuity of the superintending mechanic in the factory, a fast-speed arrangement was devised applicable to any Morse instrument, and in this way a number of comparatively old instruments were adapted and brought into use for a most important service. In the matter

at this particular kind of work from 12 to 20 men, and 2,000 insulators a day can be regularly tested and fitted in the manner described. In the gutta-percha wire department we employ about 30 people, 23 men and seven boys, and some idea of the amount of work done may be formed from the statement that there have been made up into cables for street and tunnel work during the past year no less than from 2,500 to 3,000 miles of wire. Our operations in this department are not confined to new wire simply, but all kinds of old wire are sent here for examination, and, if possible, for repair, with a view to further utilisation. For instance wires, which have had to be removed from certain street cables owing to bad working are tested here, the faulty parts cut out, and after being carefully jointed, are made almost as good as new. By this means we make the very utmost of every available inch of wire, and the item of 'old stores' in this particular branch is reduced to a minimum. Next in importance is the battery shop, where we employ from 18 to 20 men. The operations carried on here embrace everything connected with the manufacture of batteries, except the making of the mere wooden trough in which the plates and solution are contained. Nothing but the utmost care *in every stage of the manufacture* will ensure a good working battery; and as a good working battery means a good working instrument and a good working line, no pains should be spared to perfect the manufacture in this department. Contract batteries were a source of great complaint in the earlier stages of our experience, and thus we have taken to making nearly all our own. We do the coating with marine glue, we cast our own plates, make our own fittings, and in fact do everything, as I have already said, but make the wooden trough. With our present arrangements we can turn out as many as 250 batteries a week when required, and it may be interesting to state that there have passed through this department during the past year over 11,000 batteries. In addition to the manufacture of new batteries, there is carried on here the cleaning and re-fitting of old ones, and the making up of fresh troughs of the wood of such as have become in other respects useless. The preparing of arms occupies about 10 men, who turn out among them somewhere about 1,500 a day; while in the manufacture of testing boxes, and in the general work of the factory, we employ from six to eight carpenters and joiners. We also manufacture our own solder, apparently a small matter, but one which, in telegraphy at least, is really of very great importance, considering how much the goodness of a wire may be impaired by bad joints here and there, a thing of very frequent occurrence. Amongst the miscellaneous items are the manufacture of 'carriers' for the pneumatic tubes, the forging of light ironwork for the various departments of manufacture, and the distribution of tools and implements of all kinds in use for the purposes of telegraph construction and maintenance. The packing department occupies four or five men constantly, while two coopers are kept fully employed in making old casks into new, and in 'heading' those which are about to be despatched to distant points with stores of different kinds.

"These works, as I have already stated, were occupied for similar purposes by the Electric and International Telegraph Company. They were built in 1858, and, together with a large open yard in the centre of the buildings, cover an area of nearly half an acre. The buildings at the back, adjoining the Camden Depôt of the London and North-western Railway, are of two storeys high, and embrace the mechanics and carpenters shops, instrument stores, insulator, battery, and wire-fitting shops, and packing shed. Those at the front are of one storey only, and embrace the lacquering shop, testing room, tool store, and general offices connected with the works. Arrangements are being made by the Office of Works for the erection of a three-storey building and basement in place of the present one storey range, to give additional space for mechanics, and for the general purposes of the depôt. The permanent staff consists of a storekeeper, one principal assistant, and five clerks, a superintendent mechanic, foreman of the yard, and foremen of the various other branches of manufacture and repair, the majority of the men being temporarily employed as occasion requires. The storekeeper, Mr. Boll, has a residence on the premises.

"There is a branch depôt at Bolton, formerly in the occupation of the late Magnetic Telegraph Company, and held on lease for some years. The work carried on there is chiefly confined to the testing and fitting of insulators on the plan already described as in operation at Gloucester Road, the preparing of arms, and the cleaning and re-fitting of batteries. Stores of various kinds are also kept at Bolton, especially those of the heavier description, iron wire and the like, in order to their more convenient and economical distribution in the northern and north-western divisions of the system. It only remains to add that there are various depôts throughout the country, such as at Hartlepool, Grimsby, and the like, for the storing and preparing of poles, and that each divisional engineer has one or more local depôts at the most central and convenient spots in his district for the rapid and economical distribution of stores of the kinds in more general use and demand."

Royal Engineers.

By the desire of the Secretary of State for War it has been arranged;

1st. That a body of about 50 men under a commanding officer and two subalterns shall be employed in the construction of the Post Office Telegraphs, and that the subaltern in command of each portion of this force shall be immediately under the control of the Engineer of the Postal Division in which his duty shall from time to time lie, but shall not be under the control of any officer of the Postal Service of a lower grade than that of Divisional Engineer.

2nd. That a further body of about ten men shall be employed as linemen in the maintenance of the Postal Telegraphs, and shall be stationed at such places as may be convenient to the Department. They shall be under the immediate control of the Inspector in charge, under the same conditions as if they were civilians.

3rd. That a body of about 20 men shall be employed as signallers at such Postal Telegraph Offices as may be convenient to the Department, and under the immediate

From: Cassidy, Michael
Sent: 17 March 2015 15:41
To: Planning
Subject: FW: 44-44A Gloucester Avenue 2015/0462/P

Please could you upload this objection onto application 2014/0462/P.

Thanks,

Michael

Michael Cassidy
Principal Planner
Regeneration and Planning
Culture and Environment
London Borough of Camden

Telephone: 0207 974 5666
Web: camden.gov.uk

5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: jeff travers [redacted]
Sent: 05 March 2015 23:59
To: Cassidy, Michael
Subject: 44-44A Gloucester Avenue

Dear Michael
I understand Martin Shepherd has put in an objection to the proposal in this application for the Gloucester Avenue Association and named me amongst its members.
I am an architect and have lived in Gloucester Avenue for over 40 years.

Notwithstanding the Gloucester Avenue Association objections, I consider there are two considerations regarding which the present application should not be approved.
1 A small part of the complex housed the original workshop where the telegraph system was developed. This small part should definitely not be converted to residential. It is of global significance to the history of communication and needs to be retained for a use compatible with its heritage value.
2 I have investigated Stevenson's winding engine vaults to the rear. These are a heritage asset of global significance. Due to past planning approvals to nearby projects it is now only possible to provide service access and an escape route to a future scheme to enable public access to the winding engine vault via the footprint of 44-44A Gloucester Avenue. This only requires access to the rail land to the rear from the existing courtyard so should not affect the financial viability of the development of 44-44A Gloucester Avenue.

I should let you know that over the last 40 years I have met several knowledgable foreign tourists (americans and antipodians) searching in vain for railway heritage assets in the vicinity of the application site. They all testified to the global significance of the above heritage assets linked to the application site and found Camden's complicity in preventing the assets from being usefully restored as lamentable.

I hope you will ensure that use of these assets is not blocked by the proposed spec development.

Regards
Jeff Travers
Flat 1 62 Gloucester Avenue NW18JD

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.