

17 Gordon Mansions
Huntley Street
London
WC1E 7HF

2nd April 2015

Attention Seonaid Carr
Planning Officer
Camden

Dear Ms Carr

Planning Application 2015/1281P

I am setting out my comments on the new hospital project, and my objections. Due to the position of the ground floor of my flat which shares a party wall with the Students Union building, I consider my flat is the most affected and accordingly I am a most interested party. It is apparent from the height and depth of the proposed building, i.e six floors high and four floors (level 3 basement being double height) deep that the site is overdeveloped. The plans are over ambitious and whilst the building is sympathetically designed and the principle of having a non-residential hospital and consulting rooms on the site is non-controversial, the vast scale has long term adverse consequences on Gordon Mansions, the key residential building in the immediate vicinity. These relate to the loss of light to certain higher level flats in the block opposite the project which residents in those flats may comment on as they wish, but most importantly there can and, most likely, will be long term structural damage to the block 17-30 Gordon Mansion by virtue of the depth of the basement which is four floors for the entire length of the project.

On a historical note, the Students Union has caused a high level of noise transference into number 17 Gordon Mansions (raised ground floor) through the walls and floors, at time intolerable causing a noise injunction to be obtained. More recently, there has been water ingress from the Students Union building.

Basement Impact Assessment

The basement impact assessment shows quite clearly that the ground movement analysis demonstrates that block 17-30 have the greatest risk of any residential building in the vicinity to ground movement. The effect on every building (save for the non-residential building in Queens Yard) is negligible, except for block 17-30 Gordon Mansions. In the comments column in Appendix A of the Basement Impact assessment it is stated that the damage assessment is "very dependent" on certain factors i.e. the damage could be for worse. No indication is given as to what the practical effect on Gordon Mansions would be, although it would be serious for a classic old building and would result in cracks in brickwork, plasterwork, movement of window frames and doors etc. The assessment states that the likely effect is distance dependent i.e. the further away the excavation, the less risk of ground movement, which explains why the risk to most surrounding buildings is negligible or "none" whilst block 17-30 Gordon Mansions is the most affected.

There is absolutely no reason why the leaseholders and freeholder of Gordon Mansions should be expected to tolerate any level above "negligible"

The consequences of the ground movement on the interior and exterior would undoubtedly require insurance claims, and it is to be questioned whether:

- a) the buildings insurers would reject a claim outright in view of the warning that was given in the damage assessment;
- b) if the insurers covered the damage they may not cover the work necessary to prevent the damage re-occurring;
- c) if the insurers were changed, a new insurance company may not cover pre-existing risks, which this undoubtedly would be.

It is suggested that Zurich Insurance be consulted on this to make sure the buildings insurance is not voided.

In order to minimise the risk from the excavation it is proposed that the basement level is reduced to two levels, or alternatively the first 20 metres of the basement is the same as the depth of the Gordon Mansions basement and the four storey basement, if it is necessary, is constructed 20 metres closer to the Capper Street end of the project. That way the deep excavation which would result in damage is moved a reasonable distance away from block 17-30.

Just because UCH plans are over ambitious, the welfare of the residents, and long term implications to the structure of block 17-30 Gordon Mansions should not be ridden over roughshod.

Condition of Wall (to become party wall)

The wall of 17-30 Gordon Mansions is in need of certain repair work and it is vital that this work is carried out before the new building is constructed as once the building is built there will never again be any possibility of access to the Gordon Mansions wall. This is especially significant if cracks occur due to ground movement, and there will not be any way of knowing if there are cracks, as there will be no visibility due to the minimal gap between block 17-30 and the new building.

Noise

The next issue is noise transference from the hum or air conditioning, plant and machinery and the lift next to the party wall of 17-30 Gordon Mansions. Having always suffered from noise issues by virtue of the party wall, it is vital that this issue is addressed properly to minimise any noise, especially as the air conditioning pump will be situated next to the party wall and such items are at a suitable distance from the party wall.

Vehicular Access

In view of the West End Project, and the closing of Capper Street, this means that all service vehicles will have to exit Capper Street by turning right into Huntley Street, passing Gordon Mansions and turning right into Torrington Place, thus adding to the volume of traffic in Torrington Place which is the only road covered by the West End Project that will see a materially higher volume of traffic.

It is suggested that Capper Street is re-opened during certain hours to service vehicles.

Disabled Vehicles

Permits for disabled drivers can be obtained to park on single yellow lines for up to 3 hours, and this means that people visiting the hospital for appointments and treatment can leave vehicles for the duration of their visit. Therefore, between the hospital and Torrington Place, there will be cars waiting all day outside Gordon Mansions, and it will be like a car park making it impossible for vehicles (private, trade, ambulances, services) to drop off and collect from Gordon Mansions.

For the reasons given above, this new project requires substantial modification to negate any detrimental effect on the residential amenities of Gordon Mansions, the worst being the effects of the deep basement excavations on the stability of Gordon Mansions.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of L.A. Hatter.

L.A. Hatter