

Mr M Cassidy  
London Borough of Camden  
Department Management  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Dear Mr Cassidy,

**Hampstead School, Westbere Road, London, NW2 3RT**  
**Planning application for new school buildings**  
**Application reference: 2015/1672/P**

I am writing on behalf of my Clients, Mr and Mrs Franklin, who own 12 Menelik Road. Their property is to the south of the school overlooking what is at present a hard surfaced playground, which if this application is approved will be the location of a three storey teaching block. This teaching block will be directly behind their house with the flank wall at the end of and in line with their garden.

Now that the planning committee report has been released, we remain concerned about the impact that this development will have on my Clients' amenity, who are very distressed about the impact that the development will have on their enjoyment of their home and garden.

We have already submitted comments during the consultation period for this application, raising concerns regarding the scale and mass of the new building, which will fill the skyline when viewed from my Clients living space windows and rear garden. Being a dark red colour, the potential for the building to reflect light will be minimal, making the appearance of the new building far more oppressive and overbearing.

They are also very concerned about the impact the development would have on their privacy in terms of the potential for overlooking from the windows in the flank elevation of the new building, which would have a direct line of sight into their garden and the windows of their living rooms and bedrooms on the back of their house.

Finally, they are concerned that the proposed music rooms facing their property will have opening windows, and as such there is potential for noise and disturbance to impact upon their amenity, particularly during warmer weather when Mr and Mrs Franklin may be close by in their garden - and being practice rooms, they will likely be used both during and after normal school hours.

We have suggested potential remedies to these concerns, which could have been incorporated into the scheme relatively easily, such as a reconfiguration of the second floor of the building to step the upper level away from my Clients' boundary. In doing so the apparent mass of the new building would be reduced, allowing a wider view of the sky above.

Windows could be fixed in position on the flank wall and air conditioning used to cool the music rooms, which would address their concerns over noise disturbance from music lessons and rehearsals. The flank wall windows should be obscured to prevent views into my Clients' garden and property. This simple change would resolve their concerns regarding loss of privacy.

We note that a condition has been suggested to require the windows to be obscured glazing and fixed in position for the first and second floor windows. However, this does not extend to requiring the ground floor windows on this elevation to also be fixed in position. Given that the music practice rooms have the greatest potential to cause noise disturbance to the neighbours from constant music lessons or rehearsals throughout the day and after school, it is important to ensure that this source of noise is contained. We note that the music practice rooms will be acoustically treated, as highlighted at paragraph 11.11 of your report, but this would be completely worthless if the windows are opened.

Finally, it was requested that the colour of the building was changed, at least on the end elevation to allow the wall to reflect more light and take on a lighter appearance that could be less intrusive when viewed against the skyline, not necessarily against the colour of other buildings. A grey / blue colour would blend the building into the sky when viewed from my Clients' garden, and would be far less intrusive than the dark red being proposed.

I understand that you have met with my Client and the scheme Architects, where these issues were explained in detail and the outcome of that meeting was apparently that the Architects refused to make any changes to the design.

Whilst it is appreciated that changes to the position or layout of the building would be harder to achieve and may involve some other compromises to the internal layout of the classrooms, it is extremely disappointing that the Architects are not prepared to consider alternatives. Even small changes could make the world of difference to my Clients who are desperately upset about the impact that this development will have on them and their enjoyment of their property.

We note that the Council has the protection of amenities as a key objective, highlighted by the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG6), which states:

*"A key objective of the Camden Core Strategy is to sustainably manage growth so that it avoids harmful effects on the amenity of existing and future occupiers of nearby properties."*

Core Strategy Policy CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development states that the Council will protect the amenities of Camden's residents by *"making sure the impact of developments on their occupiers and neighbours is fully considered, and requiring mitigation measures where necessary."*

The supporting text to the policy highlights that protecting amenity is a key part of successfully managing growth in Camden. It goes on to say:

*"We will expect development to avoid harmful effects on the amenity of existing and future occupiers and nearby properties or, where this is not*

*possible, to take appropriate measures to minimise the potential negative impacts."*

The protection of amenities is also set out in the Development Policies, at DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. Here it is stated that:

*"The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity."*

In this instance we are concerned that these policies have not been fully considered in the context of the concerns my Client has raised, as they clearly feel that their amenities are being threatened by the proposed new three storey building directly behind and overlooking their home.

We do not wish to prevent the development from happening, and support the investment that the School is making in the future, but request again that consideration is given to simple changes to the design that would help to mitigate and reduce the impacts this scheme would have on my Clients' amenity.

Ideally, we would like to see the upper floor redesigned to set back this floor from my Clients' boundary, or indeed the position of the building moved further away. We maintain our request that this option is explored further to determine if something could be done to reduce the scale and bulk of the flank elevation.

As to the other changes, we request that the suggested conditions are amended to require all of the windows on the end elevation of the building, including those to the music practice rooms on the ground floor, to be fixed in position and obscured to reduce noise and prevent overlooking of my Clients' property.

We would also request that a condition is imposed that requires the colour of the render to be revised to a paler colour that will have a less oppressive appearance and greater light reflecting properties.

It would not be unreasonable to require these small changes through the use of conditions, and they would be fully supported by the planning policies we have highlighted above.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues and we hope that my Clients' concerns and distress can be taken into account when you determine this application. Please do consider the positive effect that amended conditions could have on their living conditions should this application be supported.

Yours sincerely



**Chris Akkrill** BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI  
**Director**

01234 924921  
07807 147256  
[ca@townplanningservices.com](mailto:ca@townplanningservices.com)

cc Ms Hannah Hutter Camben Democratic Services