

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2015/2811/P	Roger Freeman	266 Russell Court Woburn Place London WC1H 0NF	19/07/2015 11:58:38	COMMNT	I am writing to object to be change of use proposal 2015/ 2811/ P. I am resident at Russell Court, which is a large block of small flats where I have lived since 2002. The application relates only to the basement of this high block and does not take account of the rest of the block of which it forms an integral part, nor to the needs and wishes of its 500+ residents even though their company(Russell Court (Bloomsbury) Management Ltd is the freeholder and they are the company's only shareholders. When the block was built in the 1930s it had not only a basement carpark but also a Petrol station at ground level at one end of the site. Fortunately the latter, with the dangers it presented, closed some years ago. The current open access car park, which I accept is no longer required, allows access at all hours to the utilities including landline phones, water and electricity needed for the flats. This need will continue. Any change of use needs to ensure that such access continues and this is not clear to me from the current Application. There is also a need for disability access to residents in the block, which was not allowed for in the 1930s. This could best be done by a lift at entrance A in Woburn Place which would require space in the basement for its descent. I am not against the change of use in principle but consider that the present application requires detailed modification.
2015/2811/P	Rachel Escott	Flat 176 Russell Court Woburn Place London WC1N 3LW	19/07/2015 16:49:12	OBJEMAIL	As a resident of Russell Court, I would wish the operating hours (because of the associated noise) to be more in line with the hours during which noisy work is allowed within the building - e.g 8am-8pm. Also I am very concerned about fire hazard control and fire alarm provision, given the number of people who I've above the proposed storage facility.

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2015/2811/P	April Carlucci	261 Russell Court Woburn Place London WC1H 0NF	20/07/2015 22:48:11	OBJEMAIL	<p>Dear Planning Department</p> <p>I am writing to object to the change of use planning application which has been submitted by City Space Storage Limited to change the underground NCP car park located in the Russell Court block of flats at 3-16 Woburn Place into a self storage facility. I hope you will agree and reject the application.</p> <p>Since 1998 I have owned a small flat in Russell Court, where I have lived since then and for which I pay Camden Council tax. I am familiar with self storage facilities having helped friends with their storage on several occasions. I do not object in principle to self storage facilities, but I do object most strongly to one being installed in the basement of one of the largest blocks of flats (by number of units) in London. Whenever possible, self storage facilities should be housed in dedicated buildings, such as those at Access Self Storage in Belgrove St, Kings Cross and the Safestore company in Pentonville Road, rather than being integrated in a residential block and thus presenting serious potential hazards to residents and neighbours.</p> <p>Let's be direct: we have recently commemorated the tenth anniversary of the 7/7 terrorist bombings in London. Russell Court sits between Russell Square and Tavistock Square, the sites of two of the bombs, barely a few hundred metres from each tragic site. The Russell Square area, with the British Museum, Senate House and many other higher education buildings, and many tourist hotels, represents a target of serious potential for terrorist activity. A self storage facility is an invitation to people trying to harm us to store their bomb-making materials. The assertion in this application (point 23) that hazardous substances will not be stored on site is meaningless, as self storage facilities do not monitor what is stored in the cubicles; they simply make customers sign a contract stating they will not store hazardous materials. This offers no reassurances at all.</p> <p>Even if customers are not storing bomb-making materials, they might still be storing other hazardous or noxious materials which could potentially filter into the superstructure via the services risers which begin in the car park ceiling and work their way up through the ten floors of the block and connect to each of the 500 flats.</p> <p>Providing storage cubicles for people simply does not warrant taking these risks in a large block and a heavily populated and busy neighbourhood. The application does not address these issues, and experience of self storage facilities teaches us that once the staff has taken the customer's credit card, there is no more interaction, let alone monitoring of what is being stored.</p> <p>I know that neighbours with whom I have spoken are concerned about this too. Some people think that there is no more danger presented by a self storage facility than the existing car park. But the existing car park was built in 1937. Were it to be built today, we might not consider such a decision sound. At least let's take a decision now which reflects better knowledge and increased care for local residents than were considered appropriate almost 70 years ago.</p> <p>The safety of residents must take precedence over a facility which is at best a peripheral convenience to local people and businesses.</p>

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I would also like to mention that I am aware that the Russell Court Residents Association has submitted a comment supporting the application. The Residents Association has a membership of 109, less than 22% of the eligible residents. The RA Committee has considered this application solely as a means to facilitate the installation of improved disabled access in the block. Of course, I do not object to improving disabled access, but I do object to it being waved in front of Camden Planning as the key reason to approve the application. There are many issues surrounding the proposed change of use, and the Council should take all the issues together in making a decision, not the least of which I've discussed above.

Please protect the safety of my neighbours and myself by rejecting this application.

Please notify me of the Committee date.

Please redact as much of my perosnal details as allowed.

Thank you.

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