

**Henry, Genna**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 July 2015 11:11  
**To:** Gracie, Ian; Planning  
**Cc:** sarah from mortimer davies; greg leaseholder re mortimer estate; jo@404team.com  
**Subject:** FW: objections to Planning application ref. 2015/4030/p. [REDACTED]

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Planning Application; London Borough of Camden: Installation systems to buildings: Mortimer Estate, NW6 5UR and Marrick and Kington Houses, Mortimer Crescent, NW6.

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**PLEASE E-MAIL ME BACK TO CONFIRM BOTH E-MAILS RECEIVED.**

**OBJECTIONS.**

1. OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE REST OF THE AREA, ST. JOHN'S WOOD CONSERVATION AREA AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDS.

Camden Planning Department expects all buildings, including those of Camden Council's own, to make a **positive** contribution to the character of its Conservation Areas AND their immediate surrounds which contribute to the look of the conservation areas in general. This is clearly not the case with this intended project which will completely detract from the look of the area and the original architect's intention and materials used ie brick - carefully assessed by the architect in order to fit in with the surrounding properties. To make extensive changes out of keeping with the existing look of the estate and its area is sacrilege- and will remove the iconic look of the buildings- making them completely out of harmony with the historic area- which contains properties both inside and on the borders of the conservation area, of housing in various styles and ages.

Marrick House stands directly next to a grade ii listed mansion, and part of Mortimer Crescent Road is within the Conservation area.

The estate's blocks are an iconic London County Council brick build immediately post war in the 1950s, representative of its period in public sector housing design.

If you ever see a building that has been overclad in the way intended, it is simply engulfed in about 6" of solid material. As has been mentioned the brickwork harmonises with many of the neighbourhood buildings and has mellowed with age to blend into the historic milieu.

Brick is a traditional finish and its loss will result in discordant and monolithic forms in a crude, featureless render with an unduly harsh aesthetic.

The various subtle details of the buildings will be lost- and the protruding balconies will lose their original projection scale out from the wall- which had been intended and carefully thought out by the Architect.

Because the walls become thicker, window reveals become much deeper, to the detriment of the overall design and appearance of the building. The proportions and details of even quite plain buildings have been very carefully considered by their architects and few are improved by being altered in this way- becoming crude forms of their original selves. The overall architectural proportions of the building will be lost, losing any finesse or delicacy of the original design and becoming clumsy in appearance.

Cladding cannot take account of fittings like gas boxes and drainpipes, meaning it simply has to cut around these elements, leaving ugly slots and gaps. Where the cladding meets the roof is usually a problem, since it is often thicker than the soffit, meaning it sticks out beyond the edge of the roof, destroying the architectural look of the building.

## 2. INAPPROPRIATE WORK.

The aim of this project is to retain heat in these blocks of flats on this estate. There are other cheaper solutions which are more acceptable to tenants and leaseholders which Housing have refused to consider.

*a. Repair the existing badly done pointing work on the blocks: this estate was refurbished just a few years ago with work of over £8m. Part of this including redoing the pointing. This was done to such a low standard, that just a few years later, parts of it are crumbling already and it may be causing some problems with heat loss. **To spend thousands more of Camden council taxpayers money on cladding to solve any heat loss problems, is like taking a sledge hammer to crack a nut.***

*Professional advice tells us that repointing the bricks where needed would be a simpler and cheaper solution.*

*We also are of the opinion, that since the original work was done so badly, this should be redone by that firm at no cost to Camden's council tax payers or its leaseholders. Ref. Sales of Goods and Services Act relating to poor quality work and service.*

*b. Internal insulation: this could be an alternative undertaken within each flat and giving tenants and leaseholders the option of whether they want this done or not. It would be more acceptable to leaseholders.*

*c. Replacing tenants' boilers with up to date condensing models: this would be a much more effective manner of ensuring cheaper heating.*

## 3. ALLEGED HEAT LOSS DISPUTED.

The alleged heat loss and high bills is anyway disputed firmly by some tenants and leaseholders- who find this not to be so. No technical attempt to assess the true situation has been undertaken by Camden before making a decision to spend thousands of pounds its Council taxpayers' money - to see whether there is a genuine need for this project, OR NOT- basing their efforts on untested assumptions - the view of many is that the scheme is completely unnecessary and uncalled for.

## 4. CLADDING WILL REDUCE HEAT LOSS- CLAIMS DISPUTED.

This claim is disputed by those on other similar estates who have already had cladding done- they are telling us that their heating bills have not changed.

**Furthermore** Camden's claim that it will reduce its **own** heating bills is ludicrous because Camden have **no** heating bills on the estate- as individual flat owners pay their own bills and there is no internal corridor heating as the flats have open staircases and balconies for access.

## 5. NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE.

Technical advice from professionals inform us that cladding this form of build is not fit for purpose because it causes extensive internal condensation and black mould and internal damp- non of which is currently a problem on the estate.

Ref. Lakehouse OWN booklet on its work.

- . Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- . Society of Older Buildings Technical advisor.

It is fully accepted by professionals in the field of heat loss and damp issues, that brick built buildings of this type are constructed so as to allow the property to "breathe" ie. in order to allow damp air out and to completely seal a property in this manner - especially as the windows are already double glazed- will not allow damp air out of the flats, where it will fester and encourage black mould. the only way to rectify this is to open the windows, which lets heat out, which defeats and aim of the project. Also that cladding onto the brick will simply push any damp there into the inside of the flats.

**Furthermore over time, as the cladding deteriorates, damp sets in between the cladding and the original wall, making it expensive and almost impossible to fix- it will then seep into the inside of the flats causing further map issues rather than solving the problem. Camden Housing already has a history of poor ongoing maintenance, overpriced and badly done when it is attempted- and to have the coating deteriorate in this way without ongoing appropriate maintenance would be what we have all come to expect from the Housing Department.**

**PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF TENANTS WHO HAVE ALREADY HAD THE RECLADDING, INFORMS US THAT ALL OF THE ABOVE HAS BEEN BORN OUT IN PRACTICE-just a very short time after the work had been completed.**

## 6. CAMDEN INTEND TO LEAVE ONE BLOCK OUT OF THE PROJECT.

**To have one block left out of the whole estate, when the rest of the estate has had its blocks cladded, will make a farce of the architectural wholistic appearance of the estate. This block they say cannot be cladded for technical reasons in the structure. It would be far better to leave the whole estate as it is now, with its orginal brick, rather than creat this architectural fiasco of the estate's architectural look.**

## 7. FAILURE TO NOTIFY INTERESTED PARTIES.

Despite the formal planning application having been registered some time ago, leaseholders, including myself have had NO notification of this, given that we have only 21 days from the registration date to object- I only even discovered this myself because tenants on the estate have informed me.

Furthermore, we were notified on 17th June, that a planning application had been registered then and that we had 21 days to object- only to find out, having given extensive time to tracing this- that no such application had formally been made, and although the paperwork was posted to us, this was infact a lie.

We have been informed- not by Housing who seem to wish to avoid contact with leaseholders, even although their properties will be greatly affected by the project, but by tenants, who have been told that "no meetings with leaseholders are intended, apart from after planning permission has been granted"- we assume only then because of legal protocol obligations by Housing.

In addition with the current application, NO notices concerning the application have gone out to the surrounding private householders in privately owned houses and private blocks of flats surrounding the estate, or to the houses in Boundary Road, NW8, the backs of whose houses look directly onto Marrick House and which will be affected by the intended look. Since this could seriously affect the value of these surrounding properties, many of which are in the conservation area, their owners may have their own views as to the project.

#### 8. FAILURE TO PROVIDE ANY ADEQUATE INFORMATION ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION.

Housing have provided nothing but the skimpiest information about the proposed project- yet expect us to make any objections within 21 days. No trade names of the products they intend to use have been provided so that these can be researched, or historic long term evidence of their effectiveness, or any problems discovered about their long term use, stability and efficiency or problems with maintenance. Their assertions to tenants- for example "It will take a long time before Camden needs to be involved in the cost of repainting"- is based purely on their assumptions with no scientific evidence or historic proof.

Attempts by a leaseholder to gain information, have been ignored or sketchily replied to.

#### 9. WINDOW REPLACEMENTS WILL BE EXPENSIVE.

Technically Lakehouse, has informed tenants that it will be impossible to replace windows, when needed, from the outside as normal- but these have to be replaced from inside each flat- thus causing significant extra cost to Camden Council and disruption to residents on the estate- all of which could be avoided if the project does not take place.

#### 10. APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE BY RESIDENTS TO HISTORIC ENGLAND FOR THE ESTATE TO RECEIVE GRADE II LISTING.

Local authority post war estates have in the past received the above, and residents feel strongly that this estate, representative of its era, in landscaped grounds is a particularly good example of immediate post war public housing in its own time slot, just before the new concrete cutting edge public developments came into being. An extract of the application has been forwarded to you by the previous e-mail. Details of the London County Council Architect in charge of the Department at that time has also been forwarded.

#### 11. MORE NOISE AND DIRUPTION FOR RESIDENTS.

Just a few years ago the estate had a major refurbishment going on for a long time, and this proposal will cause yet more disruption yet again. Residents on the estate are mainly elderly or have very young families who would be disturbed by the work which is not needed in the first place. During the previous works, crime increased on the estate, with the scaffolding enabling easier access to the flats.

#### 12. LOSS OF LIGHT.

The cladding will protrude significantly from the windows, causing a great deal of loss of light.

#### 13. LOSS OF VALUE.

It is fully acknowledged by professionals in this field, that cladding seriously reduces the value of properties- given the maintenance issues and deterioration rate. **Camden has a responsibility to look after its housing stock and not to collude with the destruction of its values- for example by carrying out expensive and unnecessary cladding.**

14. POOR DESIGN QUALITY AND UNSYMPATHETIC MATERIALS.

Please see comments above concerning the Conservation area, and its surround, the original look of the estate etc.

15. A PRECEDENT HAS BEEN SET.

**Planning have refused permission in a similar cladding development of a local authority block ref. 2012/1337/p due to the loss of the brickwork finish.**

16. GOVERNMENT.

Within the last few weeks, the government have formally withdrawn its Green Agenda-(which includes heat issues).

Loretta Cowen  
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re: 16 Marrick House, Mortimer Crescent, NW6.