
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2015 23:46
To: Planning
Cc: McClue, Jonathan; Camden Society; Hero Granger-Taylor
Subject: Gillies House, Farjeon House, Castleden House 11-78 Dobson Close Hilgrove Estate London NW6 4RU Planning application ref 2015/4041/P

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Planning application ref 2015/4041/P Gillies House, Farjeon House, Castleden House 11-78 Dobson Close, Hilgrove Estate London NW6 4RU

I write on behalf of the Camden Civic Society to object to this application to apply thick insulating cladding to the outside of these buildings on the Hilgrove Estate. They should not undergo exterior cladding for the reasons given below.

Instead the council should pay for insulation on the inside of exterior walls of the flats of those tenants who wish it, and should give permission for leaseholders to insulate the interiors of their homes in a similar manner, to an agreed standard.

The Camden Civic Society discussed this case at the Meeting of its full Committee this evening and wishes to object on the following grounds:

Design. We have seen the letter from the 20th century Society and fully support their position. Thick insulation applied indiscriminately to these buildings will obliterate many aspects of their fine three-dimensional abstract design. Conceived and built in the 1950s by the firm of Louis de Soissons, these varied buildings are fine examples of the aspiration of a local authority, the GLC in this case, to provide social housing which was not only practical and comfortable but also elegant and architecturally literate.

It would be a great pity if the detailing which embodies these high ideals should be buried in utilitarian cladding by the estate's current owners, the London Borough of Camden.

Actual energy savings and the "health" of these buildings. While a thick cladding, combined with the double glazing already installed, will doubtless reduce the amount of energy needed to heat these buildings, once the energy used in the manufacture of the cladding materials and in their attachment to the building has been taken into account, it is doubtful that the overall reduction in energy will be very great.

A district heating system might deliver better savings.

It is also likely that the exterior cladding will cause problems of its own. Brick is a breathing material, allowing air and moisture out as well as in. To hermetically seal the housing units may well cause the air within them to be stale and damp, encouraging moulds to grow and damaging the health of the inhabitants.

Camden's reasons for wanting to carry out this work now. We are concerned that Camden is rushing into this work in order to catch the deadline for the Energy Company Obligation.

We are also worried that the new long-term maintenance contract with Lakehouse may be acquiring a momentum of its own: might Lakehouse have offered Camden apparently advantageous terms in order to maintain its income stream when the best interests of Camden's tenants, leaseholders and council tax payers could have been better served by not doing the work at all?

Signed Hero Granger-Taylor, committee member, Camden Civic Society

