

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2015/4030/P	Jason Swards	2 Kington House Mortimer Crescent London NW6 5NU	24/08/2015 15:16:17	OBJ	<p>I am writing to object against planning application number Ref 2015/4030/P in relation to the proposed cladding work on the Mortimer Estate and at Kington and Marrick Houses.</p> <p>I appreciate that some of my objections may be outside the remit of the planning department. However for simplicity I am writing one email which also includes various related matters that I would like to raise with local Councillors and Camden officials. By writing one email I am aiming to ensure that any points I make that are relevant to planning get seen by the planning department.</p> <p>Please note that for simplicity I will refer to the Estate in my objections, but when I say this it also encompasses the other blocks to be included in the works which are Kington and Marrick Houses.</p> <p>I am a leaseholder in Kington House.</p> <p>Before starting I would like you to ensure that you consider the number of objections put by several other residents/leaseholders of the Estate. What you should not do is say that because other residents have not made any comments that this is acceptance of the proposals. Comments can be made both for and against and it is the number of these that should be looked at.</p> <p>No comment is not a yes vote!</p> <p>I have heard from other Leaseholders/ residents that applications have been made to have the Estate listed. Surely before a decision on these proposals is made, adequate time should be given for these to be processed. We don't want a scenario, as is common nowadays, whereby a landlord ploughs ahead with work before a listing comes into force, making the listing worthless, when it is granted because it is too late and the damage to our heritage has been done.</p> <p>OBJECTIONS</p> <p>There is no doubt that this proposal will dramatically change the way the Estate looks. The Mortimer Estate, Kington and Marrick House were designed by a renowned architect Sir Robert Matthew as a cohesive set of buildings, and in my opinion they are sited in such a way that they complement the beautifully designed crescent in which they are situated.</p> <p>I have spoken to Andrew Lovern of Camden Council who is the sustainability officer and the contact at Camden for these planned works. He has told me that planning have already been involved with this proposal and that they insist that brick slips are used on the walls of on the ground floor of each block so that they remain "in keeping" with what is already there. To my mind this is clear proof that planning accept that the look of these blocks is worth keeping. But having over eighty percent of the building basically whitewashed is not within keeping. The brick slips are therefore just a token gesture so that Camden can be seen to doing the right thing, when basically they are doing what they want. The proposed work will completely destroy the look of these beautiful buildings with their character. And the brick lines make the walls pleasing to the eye. Instead we will be left with a monotone sterile looking estate with just masses of blank characterless walls which I feel will just bear down on residents and could actually be depressing.</p> <p>As I live on the ground floor, when I look out of my window, I mainly see the higher levels of the estate and therefore would not see the brick slips on the lower levels. Therefore from my point of view all I am going to see is acres of off white wall. I am also concerned about what the glare will look like on the occasionally sunny day that we have as it could be quite overwhelming with such a mass of white wall covering a site of a few acres.</p> <p>These large blank spaces will no doubt be a great canvas for Graffiti which is a well-documented fact. This not just an eye sore, which will make the estate look like a ghetto, but Graffiti tagging can have</p>

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					<p>serious repercussions. This happened several years ago, not far from the estate, when a teenager was murdered over tagging. Why do Camden want to help to facilitate this type of problem?</p> <p>At the residents meeting we were told by one of the panel, from Lakehouse, that the brick slips are required by planning because without them the estate would look like social housing in an Eastern Bloc Country and all that implies about cheap prefab looking buildings and poverty. I do not think that large blocks of flats with 5 floors will not look like this just because they have some brick slips on them on the ground floor. The rendering will just be too overpowering.</p> <p>We were also told by Mr Lovern at the meeting that Camden had carried out this type of cladding/ rendering on single blocks across the borough and that Camden now want to see what cladding will look like on a larger estate.</p> <p>Why should this Estate be used as an experiment? In my view me to ruin irrecoverable such a beautiful estate of its period as an experiment is similar to terrorist smashing up world heritage sites. By definition experiments can go wrong. How would Camden remedy this?</p> <p>Since the start of this "consultation" Camden have been keen to say that this will not be the same rendering that was used on the Kilburn Gate Estate which is directly opposite the Mortimer Estate After the works the estate looks a mess with various bits clad and other bits not. The stairwell of the building in Mortimer Crescent is detached from the main building and has no living space around it therefore it has not been clad, whereas the main building has. It really does show that Camden have scrimped on the job financially just to get a quick fix.</p> <p>This shows that Camden can get it wrong and they should not be allowed get it wrong again by experimenting on the Mortimer Estate.</p> <p>Whilst talking about Kilburn Gate estate and that it is now a mish mash of materials colour etc. This estate is right opposite the Tenants Hall and Hinchinbrook House on the Mortimer Estate. These two buildings are not being clad. The Tenants Hall, obviously because it does not have any living space and the other because it has cavity walls.</p> <p>This means that the Mortimer Estate will now also become a hickledy pickledy mess of buildings some clad and some not.</p> <p>My understanding is that on the stairwells only the sides attached to living space will be clad so creating further mish mash of finishes on the estate.</p> <p>Another aspect of this mismatching of colours and materials are the retaining walls of the main estate and the outer blocks. These walls are made from the same, or similar brick, to those used for the buildings.</p> <p>Therefore this proposal is nowhere near within keeping and is actually the opposite.</p> <p>As mentioned the two buildings not clad are opposite the Kilburn Gate Estate. This means that on walking up Kilburn Priory from Maida Vale you will now have a variety of different buildings in Kilburn Gate and then two small untouched blocks, on the Mortimer Estate and then the overpowering height of rendering with brick slips on the bottom from the remainder of the estate. It is obvious that Kilburn Gate is a problem, so why do Camden want to exacerbate it by moving onto the adjoining estate.</p> <p>It does not matter that the materials used might be different from those on Kilburn gate the look will be the same.</p> <p>This means that after having two cohesive but separate estates there will now be what will look like a mass building of different (prefab type style) materials, just thrown together. This reminds me of going</p>

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past allotments where gardeners have salvaged discarded material to each make their own sheds etc. with now common plan or consistency in materials or design.

Is this the image Camden want to give to its residents? Also this is the view that Tourists will get from the prestigious Hotel that backs onto Kilburn priory at the junction where Kilburn Gate and Mortimer Estate meet. Is this the view we want to sell our Country on?

The Mortimer Estate is next to the St Johns Wood Conservation Area. At the meeting with Mr Lovern he said that planning permission would not be granted for this work if the Estate was in a conservation area. This goes to show that proposal would not be good enough to be in the affluent area St Johns Wood but can be foisted onto less affluent Council property residents.

Why have Camden not proposed something that would be allowed in a conservation area. Thus making a nice cohesive transition between a conservation area and a non-conservation area. This proposal will very divisive and can cause all sorts of social problems. Is it not bad enough that within 150 yards of the Mortimer Estate, and in the conservation area, that there is already a divide whereby the “haves” area has its own permanent private security guards patrolling the streets thus indicating their wealth? Instead of raising Council Estate resident aspirations the “have nots” are being told you are poor so you have to put up with dross.

Cladding like this is being carried out all over the borough and allowing more to be carried out will mean that the borough will become monotone. This will be similar to the sterile high streets that we have all across the country that many Councils are now trying to change.

The cladding will:-

- 1) Reduce light to flats because it will create an 8 cm deep frame on the outside. My flat is on the ground floor and is shaded by the Abbey Estate on one side and trees on the other and means that we have to use a lot of lighting. This work will not make it any better but will make it worse, meaning that we will have to use more lighting and therefore more electricity in direct contradiction of the purpose of these works.
- 2) The cladding will built in such a way that the frames of the double glazing will be partially covered over. This will mean that should the windows need to be replaced this cannot be done without damaging the cladding. I understand that this might not happen as far as Camden are planning, in the next five years, however I believe that the windows are my responsibility and therefore I can have them replaced if I want to do this. (After seeking Camdens permission).
- 3) My flat already suffers from terrible condensation, and my mother won a court case against Camden with regard to this. Cladding can make this worse. I currently do everything I can to prevent condensation so any increase in condensation levels will mean that I will just not be able to deal with it. I cannot air the flat anymore and when the wind is blowing down the wind channel from the Mary Green tower block I cannot have a through draft as it literally smashes things.
- 4) Rendering will become stained from various things including the condensation from Combi boilers, overflow pipes and from various other things such as rust. At present these are disguised by the colour of the brick but no doubt having an off white render these marks will show up horrendously.
- 5) The cladding will extend the outer walls of the building by 8 cm meaning that the width of the

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walkways will be reduced. This will cause problems for people in wheelchairs and pushing buggies. It will also mean that when people leave flats they will be more likely to scrape along the metal railings. We already suffer from this late at night with a regular clanging noise. This will be exacerbated meaning that the peaceable enjoyment of my flat will be affected.

- The HS2 route has not yet been finalised, and Kington House is very close to the main railway line, and from drawings I have seen the work might go directly underneath. Therefore I think it would be foolish to carry out works of this expense when this has not been determined.

- The plans for the work are not very informative. Kington House (I am not sure about other blocks) has two small brick balconies on the ground floor and I can not tell if these are to be covered by brick slips. If planning permission is granted, I would ask that brick slips are attached to the balconies as well. I know that these are not attached to a living area but for such a small covering it would at least keep some cohesion on the block, even though the whole estate will be a mess.

Mr Lovern has said that the work will not go ahead without a grant, however this grant is not guaranteed and will only be received once work has been completed and approved.

- Has insurance been taken out to cover the contingency that Camden might fail in getting this grant? Only carrying out the work if the grant will be received shows that Camden are not as intent, as they would like to make out, on proving their green credentials. If it was needed so much then the work would have the work done at whatever cost. Not just because a grant was available.

This is a big indicator that the works are not as urgent as Camden make out and therefore do not justify the ruination of the Estate, and the local area, in such a massive and ugly way.

If Camden were that worried about Green issues they would be cladding the Tenants Hall as well, but they can't get a grant for that!

This work appears to be rushed through just so that a grant can be received as if it is not done in time the grant will not be available. Camden do not This has meant that this proposed works will be carried out using the cheapest and quickest method, which does not mean the best method.

We have been told us that the cladding will save us money, in the long term. In the Lakehouse booklet regarding the works, they estimate the saving to be around £250 a year. My current annual fuel bill is around £900. As my Mother is retired and at home a lot she has the heating on a lot more than someone who works 9 to 5. Based on this annual bill I cannot see that the saving would be as much as £250. In fact, I have previously estimated that the cost of heating the flat for the year would be around £250.

Therefore unless the cladding is so good that we would never need the heating on at all, I believe this saving to be an over estimate. However assuming the estimate is right, the cost of the works for my flat is nearly £10,000. This would take nearly 40 years to recoup. Why should I have to find the money as a leaseholder to pay for this (and also why should Camden rent payers have to fund their share) so that Camden council can meet its green targets. 40 years is not a justifiable payback period.

In the rush to get the project completed hastily to obtain the grant has any consideration been given to how this work could affect Leaseholder complying with their duties per their leases? For example I believe that it is my obligation to look after the windows. But how can I do this if I cannot have access to them because of the cladding?

Camden have sold this project on the fact that it might prevent fuel poverty. However they are investing a lot of money into one estate to achieve this. As it could take around 40 years at today's prices to

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					<p>recoup my outlay, then maybe Camden were better off saving the money now and using it to help those who may fall into fuel poverty in the future I cannot believe that Camden is expecting that much fuel poverty!. Even after taking into consideration inflation (which could be reduced by investing the money) I cannot see a saving being made financially by me for 30 years.</p> <p>10 years ago when the estate was about to have new roofs, I suggested solar panels for the communal lighting. This would usually take about 15 years to recoup the cost for. However Camden did not want to do it. But they expect leaseholders to wait 30 years to recover their costs. To me it seems that Camden are being rather crafty, by making leaseholders partly fund Camden's costs in reaching omission targets. This is not what Leaseholders are here to do!</p> <p>Camden seem to want to show that they have been very open in this consultation, however residents were not told about the proposal until the planning application was close to being made. If Camden had really been, they could have started dialogue from soon after the feasibility of the project was considered. This could have given residents a much better say in the proposed works rather than have to discuss a proposal that Camden have already come up with and will not move an inch on. This was proved in the last round of major works where residents had to enlist the help of the local Liberal party to get the colour of the new railings changed to one they wanted. How is this consultation? As with the last works this consultation has just been a box ticking exercise.</p> <p>If the proposed plans are to be passed, I would ask that you take into consideration the fact that many residents would like to keep their coal holes. Storage space on the estate is very limited and these provide a convenient place to store things like paint etc. We use it to keep our shopping trolleys in. Therefore if a way could be found so that as much space as possible was retained in these it would be appreciated.</p> <p>I would also like to add my reticence at having Camden carry out a Major Works project on the Estate. I have lived here for over 30 years and in that time two Major Works projects have taken place and both have been appalling. When I mentioned this, to Camden, before the 2nd set of works I was told things would be different. They were not! In fact they were worse (my complaints are well documented)</p> <p>Part of the work is still waiting to be remedied from 2007/08 even though several months ago we were promised, by Fiona Joseph, that this would be done within two weeks of the letter informing us of the works.</p> <p>It does seem to be arrogant of Camdens modern day architects and designers to radically change an award winning architects work so dramatically. How many people involved in this have won such notable awards for their work?</p> <p>In 2007/08 the Mortimer Estate had major works carried out under the banner "Raising the Standard". This shows that Camden understand the need to raise the standard of people's homes and environment. There are many reasons for doing this including raising peoples aspirations. I believe that the work to be carried out will not be an improvement but will make the whole area look like a slum, with the knock on effect socially. This project might be a success in reducing carbon omissions but at what cost socially?</p> <p>Planning laws were introduced to oversee the urban sprawl that was developing, but now Camden want to go back to those days by creating its own urban sprawl and by using the rules to do it as basically Camden is applying to Camden for the permission.</p>

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To sum up, the Mortimer Estate, Kington & Marrick house were designed by a very distinguished architect who won awards for his work and in the case of the Royal Festival Hall, this has been given Grade I listing.

This Estate should not be covered up it should be celebrated.

Jason Swards
2 Kington House
