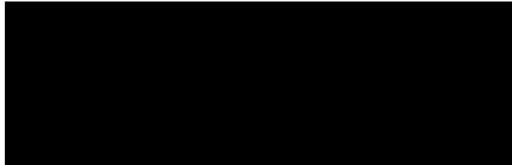


**Flat 3
Queen Alexandra Mansions
Grape Street
London WC2H 8DX**



Planning department
London Borough of Camden

By email

Attention Kate Phillips

29 August 2015

Dear Sirs

15 Grape Street, London WC2: planning application ref 2015/4205/P

I refer to the above planning application. I am a resident of one of the mansion blocks in Grape Street.

15 Grape Street is of course the address of the Cuban Embassy and consulate.

I have the following comments:

Design

Although the building is not listed, it is situated at the bottom of a street containing a number of listed buildings and, more generally, the street is environmentally sensitive. There is a common use of terracotta facing and harmoniously coloured facades. It is not clear whether the proposed Grape Street elevation of the extension respects this consistency and harmony.

I note that it is apparently intended to use the lower ground floor as office space. It is unclear whether there will be adequate lighting or ventilation. It would not be acceptable

to take any action, in order to provide light or ventilation, which would further reduce the pavement space in Grape Street.

Access issues

Three points:

- As you will have seen on inspection, the pavements in Grape Street are particularly narrow and the space to pass by outside 15 Grape Street is constantly restricted by the almost permanent daytime parking of diplomatic vehicles. There is already an access entrance in Grape Street (as well as one on High Holborn). Regularly there are queues of people standing outside the Grape Street entrance. This blocks the pavement. Another storey will of course increase the number of people coming and going. The situation will be exacerbated once 9-13 Grape Street is occupied. Accordingly, it should be a requirement that access to the new storey should be via the High Holborn entrance.
- For similar reasons, there should be a restriction on bicycle parking in Grape Street and a requirement for the developer to provide off street bicycle parking. Perhaps they can use the same space on High Holborn as is used by the delivery vehicles of the Domino outlet.
- There should also be a restriction on occupants of the building using Grape Street as a place to congregate and smoke.

Section 106 Agreement

It is not clear from the materials whether there will be a Section 106 agreement. The developer will clearly profit from any positive response by the Council to its application. If there is, it should be for the direct benefit of Grape Street and its residential and commercial occupiers. Grape Street has been neglected far too long. For example, improved street lighting is urgently required, in the hope it might reduce the instances of public urinating and vomiting.

Construction Programme

I do not know when it is proposed to carry out the work or how much disruption this will cause. I set out below some factors which need to be taken into account.

In terms of timing, it should only start after the completion of the ongoing works at the Shaftesbury Theatre opposite (which has already deprived us of one pavement) and at a different time from any works at 9-13 Grape Street (the subject of a previous and major planning application, which, if implemented, will be very intrusive for at least 12 months). In support of this point, I would mention that the synchronicity of the Crossrail and Centre Point works have deprived Londoners of significant amounts of pavement space at a time when access to Tottenham Court Road station is restricted to the entrance on the side of Oxford Street where there is no pavement. When I asked how this absurd and highly

dangerous situation could have been permitted, I was told, implausibly, that the Council was powerless.

Before any works start, there should be full consultation with Grape Street residents. In the case of the Shaftesbury Theatre development, the consultation process was wholly inadequate and altogether disregarded the impact on residents or my building, despite purporting to authorise all night working.

Hearing

Please advise me of the date and time of any hearing on this application, as I should like to attend and make oral representations.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Bloxham.