

Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee

254-256 Camden Road
(Ashton Court)

Date: 22 September

Planning application Reference: 2015/4553/P

Proposal: Reconfiguration, part demolition and extension of care home

Summary: Subject to the implementation of our recommendations, including limiting the number of new houses to 4, we do not feel that the proposed development will have an adverse effect on the Conservation Area and thus have no objection to the proposal

Comments:

1. There are a number of weaknesses in the technical drawings.
 - 1.1. While the Design and Access statement (7.3) refers to materials - *'the material palate has been chosen to reflect the existing building and context'* - no notation is included on the drawings to specifically confirm the materials to be used.
2. The bulk scale and proportion of the proposed development are generally acceptable.
3. The proposal maintains is appropriately complementary to the design of the existing buildings on the Ashton Court site
4. In the choice of materials
 - 4.1. The proposal to use stock brickwork for the main elevations (to match existing) is positive relative to the retained existing parts of the Ashton Court development and adjacent properties.
 - 4.2. The standing seam zinc roofing proposed for the link building facing Canteloves Road and the Camden Mews houses is not *"reflective of the materials palate in the Mews and surrounds"* as stated in the Design and Access statement, item 7.3. A more appropriate pitched roofing material reflective of the local materials palate in our opinion would be natural slate.
5. With respect to the durability of the materials

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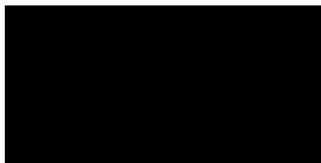
- 5.1. All material choices are positive with the exception of the zinc roofing proposed for the link building and houses, as referred to in 4.2 The durability of the zinc roofing is questionable and is likely to have less than half the life of slate roofing.
6. We note that Ashton Court is currently and wholly a sheltered housing development. The funding for the redevelopment and new development of the much improved sheltered housing would appear to be secured (at least in part) by the construction and sale of 5 private houses to the east, Camden Mews side, of the site. Whilst we have no issue with the construction of the private houses, *per se*, we do question both the availability of amenity space and the level of privacy that they will enjoy
 - 6.1. The houses have very limited external amenity space, small external terraces and decks at ground floor and second floor.
 - 6.2. At ground floor the apparently unshielded decks face directly onto the amenity space that will be exclusive to Ashton Court. Privacy, therefore, is not afforded to either the sheltered housing or private housing residents.
 - 6.3. We suggest the introduction of obscure glazing to the terracing and decks to avoid overlooking.
7. The development includes the felling of a mature ash tree to facilitate the mews housing development. This is unfortunate.
 - 7.1. The ash tree does not appear to have a tree preservation order attached and with planning approval could be removed. The tree report indicates the tree would be replaced with an '*instant impact tree that suits the space and environment*'. However, the submitted drawings do not indicate replacement of the Ash tree.
 - 7.2. Alterations must be made to the submitted proposed drawings to indicate the position and type of proposed replacement tree and we suggest an appropriate planning condition be attached.
8. Under the proposal, the 4 car parking spaces currently accessed from Camden Mews will be removed and not replaced. Although parking permits will not be available to the residents of the 5 new mews houses, outside current regulated hours there will almost certainly be an additional street parking burden in this section of Camden Mews. For exiting local residents, this will be a major irritant and could, not unreasonably, lead to a request to extend the regulated hours for parking.
9. We question the appropriateness of constructing 5 houses on this site
 - 9.1. The pre-application Consultation reports, section 6.0 of the Design and Access statement that the original proposal was for 4 mews houses. The advice received from the Camden Planning department, however, was

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that the frontage of houses was too great and so the number of houses was increased to 5.

- 9.2. A regrettable consequence of this advice may have contributed to the introduction of basement rooms whose use, due to minimal natural lighting, is unspecified
- 9.3. The two double bedroom, four person houses are minimal family houses. We suggest the applicant's original proposal for 4 houses would be more appropriate for the development.
10. Subject to the satisfactory resolution of the concerns listed in the foregoing, we have no objection in principle to the proposals relating to the sheltered housing improvements and associated additions to Ashton Court. The concerns include
 - 10.1. Full information on the replacement tree (Para 7)
 - 10.2. Revisions to the roofing materials for the link block fronting Cantelowes Road.(Para 4.2)
 - 10.3. Limiting the number of new housing units to 4 as originally proposed This will improve the minimal space in the layouts and the increased frontage will create the opportunity for more spacious 3 bedroom (as opposed to the 2 bedroom) family houses. It should be noted that the overall design principles established for 5 houses, such as setting back of the second floor from the Camden Mews frontage, are equally adaptable to 4 houses. (Para 9)
 - 10.4. Restricting the number of new house units to 4, will also avoid the need for (increasingly) controversial basements. As is evident from the opposition to the proposed development at 85 Camden Mews, the construction of basements is a major concern for local residents



Signed:

David Blagbrough
Chair
Camden Square CAAC

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