

28 June 2015

Dear Mr Viviers

I am writing in recognition of the revised proposal for demolition (within Camden Square Conservation Area) of a garage and replacement with housing.

Within conservation areas, Camden's Local Area Requirements for Planning Applications require information about "the significance of the architectural and historical interest and character of the building or structure"; and "should explain the sources considered". Also, conversion or change of use of a commercial property requires evidence that there is no demand for the site for alternative business uses and that the property has been marketed at realistic prices for a period of two years.

Heritage - an industrial building

Camden New Town was set out in the 1830s-1840s, after building the Regent's Canal (1820) and before the North London railway line above, and the cutting for the London Midland Line below. There was substantial goods activity, both around the canal and the railway lines (eg the nearby coal depots and the metropolitan cattle market, now Caledonian Park). And horses had in stabling under Camden Road and in mews at the back roads of houses.

But the twentieth century was the century of the motor-engined car. This is well set out in the English Heritage research published as Carscapes - The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscapes in England, by Kathryn Morrison and John Minnis, Yale Press, 2012.

There was selling cars: Camden Road had car show rooms at 85-89 (Nissan to 2004) and 139-143 (formerly Camden Road LMS station, sometime a car wash, currently AutoDeutche). There were petrol stations at 85-89 (Shell then ESSO, formerly housing), and 196-206 Camden Road (BP, built over the LMS railway, as was the Irish Centre in Camden Square). There were private garages for houses - several local mews conversions included garages, although more recently these have been converted for more housing space. As for repair garages, Camden retains 108a Camden Road, currently Buchanan's, within Camden Broadway Conservation Area, built before 1914 as a full Type 1 Shed repair garage (Morrison & Minnis, p 107), while Castlehaven Garage, on close to the North London Line at 2-6 Wrotham Road / 54a St Pancras Way was demolished for housing in 2005.

Smaller garages in surrounding mews continue this heritage:

Lucky Motors at 17 Camden Mews;



Camden Cab Co, 2 Agar Place:



MDA Motors at 50 Rochester Place



Commercial use

Camden's Core Strategy CS8 seeks to "support Camden's industries by safeguarding existing employment sites and premises in the borough that meet the needs of modern industry and other employers... [and] expect a mix of employment facilities and types ... particularly those under 100sqm, and ensure that new proposals do not result in a net loss of premises suitable for small businesses."

The 2008 Tym Report for Camden Council stated: "Our market analysis has shown that Camden's industrial/warehousing market is tight, with a definite shortfall of supply against demand, largely due to competition from higher-value uses... The Council needs to protect those existing industrial/warehousing sites and areas which remain fit for market."

We have seen above that this area of Camden has a historic and current capability within the vehicle servicing industry, within which 97 Camden Mews plays its part. There are no grounds for demolition of this industrial property within a conservation area to create private residential use.