

Application No: 2015/5847/P

We are long-term leaseholders and full time occupants of 64E Fitzjohns Avenue, originally a Victorian house which dates from the late 1870's, now divided into flats. On the land at the rear of no. 64, visible from the street, two mews houses, now numbered 66, were constructed in the early 1990's from a single building that housed Victorian stables/garages. The conversion extended the original building height to permit two storeys. The environment of the mews houses presents a pleasant outlook, with a cobbled garden for recreation, planting that provides seasonal colour and some privacy to the occupants of the upper ground floor of no.64 and a mature birch tree. Demolition of these two mews houses and two new buildings of three storeys each with a large basement are now proposed.

We urge the Council to reject this Application outright as it fails to comply with Camden Council's Development Policies, Camden Planning Guidance and the Fitzjohns Netherall Conservation area statement. We detail our objections below:

1a. The Fitzjohns/Netherall Conservation area statement describes Fitzjohns Avenue as "the most prominent street in the area..... built predominately over a ten year period, from the late 1870's to the late 1880's..... the gabled, tiled roofs step down the hill punctuating the skyline. ... Gaps between the properties give glimpse views". No. 64, approximately halfway down on the east side, is noted as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Camden Development Policy requires that any development ".....preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area"[DP25] It notes that "Past alterations.....should not be regarded as a precedent for subsequent proposals [DP24.12] and that "Development will not be permitted that causes the loss of trees and/ or garden spaces where this is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area"[25.5]. In addition, Camden Planning Guidance states that "Good design should positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of the existing buildings and other buildings immediately adjacentthis is particularly important in conservation areas" [CDP2.9]

Glimpse views between houses on Fitzjohns Avenue are part of the character of the area. This proposed back land development threatens the magnificent plane tree in the garden of 15 Akenside Road, adjacent to no. 66, clearly visible from Fitzjohns Avenue. Together with the proposed felling of the lovely, mature birch tree in the garden of 66 Fitzjohns Avenue, damage to these trees would destroy rather than enhance the area's character.

1b. The proposed development , ignores sustainability [DP 22] and is inappropriate to the context [DP 24]. The adding of an extra storey represents overdevelopment and impacts negatively on glimpse views from the street and vistas locally. Contrary to Camden's Planning Guidance key message [10]"All developments should incorporate green and brown roofs", the development proposes a zinc roof for the upper storey, that would, if permitted, blight the visual landscape seen from nearby properties.

2. The proposed development incorporates a large basement, where none currently exists, occupying the full site. Camden Planning Guidance on Basements and Light wells ([CPG4 2.6] states that there should be "no impact on any trees on (...the site) or adjoining the site, or to the water environment or land stability" and that the preference is that basement development should "not extend beyond the footprint of the original building". This Application clearly ignores current guidelines and includes the explicit felling of one tree in order to extend the basement way beyond the footprint of the original buildings. In terms of the water environment and land stability, we have

read the documents submitted with Application. We find their assessment of the likely impact on no.64 and to the environment locally, unconvincing e.g. the map submitted shows watercourses, possibly tributaries close to the source of the river Tyburn, running underneath no 64 Fitzjohns Avenue and these do not attract comment. As non-experts, we trust that the Council ,as custodians of the area's heritage, will audit the information supplied most rigorously and order additional audits to be supplied, should they not be fully satisfied.

3a. The amount of construction work envisaged, even under the optimistic assumptions of the construction plan, will increase noise, vibration and air pollution in an area that already carries substantial vehicle traffic. Negative impact on human health locally, particularly on the very young, older people and those with existing heart and lung conditions cannot be discounted [CS 16.14].

3b. We are most concerned about the safety of local residents during construction, particularly small children, who through the pavements of Fitzjohns Avenue, many on scooters, at certain times. Large lorries will be required to exit many times, over months, from a narrow driveway, into Fitzjohns Avenue, in order to remove earth and demolition debris. The exit is adjacent to a bus stop and bus shelter. Sight lines may well be further obscured by the proposed site office suspended above the pavement. Our concerns are not groundless. In the past, the brick entrance post (belonging to no.64 at the right), has proved vulnerable to vehicles exiting from no.66. Damage from one such incident was the subject of a Dangerous Structure Notice (21.06.2011 Enforcement No. 11/DS/0028).

3c. If this development is granted permission, post-construction [DP 26; CP2.27] the additional windows in the proposed second storey will overlook 64 Fitzjohns Avenue . Light pollution will increase for the surrounding residents from new skylights in the extended basement and upper windows. Camden Development Policy states that "Lighting should only illuminate the intended area and not affect or impact on its surroundings" [DP24 26.4]. Inevitably perhaps, there will also be an increase in noise from ventilation and extraction systems and, additionally from a pump designed to mitigate the effects of increased water flow.

3d. Camden Planning Guidance states that developments should accommodate adequate space for the storage of recyclables and waste, accommodate recycling and refuse collection for any waste contractor, have designated storage areas, be sensitively designed/located, especially in Conservation Areas and minimise nuisance to occupiers and neighbours, e.g., noise, obstruction, odours, pests. [CDP 10]The proposed development fails to comply as it omits any provision for the storage of waste and recycling.

Please keep us informed.

Professor & Mrs Green
11.02.2016