

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/1590/P	Sarolta Blunar	124 Fellows Rd NW3 3JH	06/05/2016 12:43:27	SUPPRT	<p>I am writing in support of the planning application from Abacus school. It is an outstanding school that is needed to provide school places for Belsize.</p> <p>Local schools</p> <p>While it is true that in Belsize and in Hampstead there are a large number of schools, the overwhelming majority of them are private/fee-paying schools. Of the state-funded primary schools, most of them are faith or church schools, with either a limited number of places or none at all for people who do not attend church. Two of the three secular schools are single form entry schools and tend to be oversubscribed. This is the whole reason why Abacus was set up in the first place - a lack of school places for children in the Belsize area. Without Abacus many Belsize children would only be offered places at schools a long distance away, like they were before the school was set up, such as at Brecknock School on the border of Islington which is an hour's journey.</p> <p>Location of school</p> <p>Turning the old police station into a school is a wonderful way of retaining the building as a community asset. This is so much better than it being turned into luxury flats and lost to the community forever. While the location is not perfect for a school for Belsize, it is still nearby and well within walking distance for the catchment area. Let's be clear, the area has been searched very thoroughly for possible locations - by Camden Councils, the local people behind the school and by the Education Funding Agency. This is the only viable option - other properties looked at were all too small, impossible to adapt, too far away or not available. Yes, it is conceivable that at some point in the future another viable property would emerge, but the school exists now, it needs a permanent home now and can't wait for a fantasy perfect venue to emerge.</p> <p>Let's be clear about where it actually is. Objectors suggest it is in the heart of Hampstead Village, on a busy shopping street. This is simply not true. Downshire Hill is at the bottom of Hampstead Village. The shops end at the junction of Downshire Hill and Rosslyn Hill and the pavement is both wider and much quieter than up near the tube station.</p> <p>Traffic</p> <p>Part of the founding ethos of Abacus is that it is a "walk to school" school and this would continue as the school grows in its permanent home. Does this mean that no children would ever be driven to Abacus? Of course not, but as a local school with this ethos, most children would walk to school. Objectors to the proposals have made claims about huge volumes of extra traffic as a result of the school, but this is a false analysis. First of all it is largely based on people's experience of the huge number of private schools in the area, which have children from all over north London. These schools account for the vast majority of the school run traffic. Secondly, if it was not for Abacus, children in Belsize would be forced to go to schools further away, i.e. schools outside of walking range. This would cause more traffic in Camden generally, including in Hampstead. Belsize children need to go to school somewhere and if they can go to school locally then the impact on traffic is kept to a minimum.</p>

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It has also been suggested by objectors that children going to the school will block the pavements and cause chaos. Sure, the entrance to any school gets busy around the start and end of the school day, but the numbers of people entering/leaving the school at peak times will be much lower compared to local tube stations. The peak time footfall at Hampstead Tube Station is much higher than what would occur at Abacus, even when it reaches full size and the pavement on Rosslyn Hill is much wider.

Noise

You can't have a school without some noise and as a society we need schools. Many people across London, including me, live in the vicinity of schools without the noise being a real problem. You are talking about the sound of children playing for a few periods of daytime on weekdays only for about 75% of the year. That said, the plan for a roof-top play deck would reduce the noise impact on the local area as the sound largely goes up instead of bouncing off walls.

Design

The proposed design is sympathetic to the heritage of the existing building, retaining its fine facade on Rosslyn Hill and Downshire Hill. The rebuilding at the back will not be visible from the street, except a very narrow field of vision from Downshire Hill. In terms of the interior, anyone who visited the police station would attest to it being a mess internally, a rabbit warren of corridors and pokey rooms.

Please approve the application.

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/1590/P	E Taylor	NW3 5AT	07/05/2016 12:07:57	INT	<p>I am writing in support of this planning application as a long-term resident of Belsize Park and as the mother of a Camden Primary school child who walks to school. I must also state that I am a governor and founder of Abacus Belsize Primary School.</p> <p>The history of the need for this school goes back many years. Residents in Belsize ward find that because of the preponderance of faith state primary schools in Camden and the small size of many local community schools, those parents requiring a secular education for their children are often left without a local primary school place for their children. This means long trips, perhaps in a car, to schools all over Camden.</p> <p>There are several points I would like to raise:</p> <p>61% of households in Camden do not own a car. This is the 6th lowest car ownership in the UK, beaten only by neighbouring boroughs of Islington and Westminster, along with City of London, Hackney and Tower Hamlets. In Belsize ward, there was a 3.9% reduction in car ownership between 2001 and 2011, despite substantial population growth in Camden. Anxieties around the siting of a secular state primary school for local residents leading to a significant increase in car traffic in the area would seem unfounded in the face of this data. One has to remember too, that parents of children who go to Abacus are local residents themselves, heavily invested in their environment and that of their children. They do not want an increase in local traffic any more than those who object to this planning application and yet they support the siting of the school at the Police station as they will be able to walk to it, rather than being allocated a school on the outer fringes of Camden. Abacus has a strong focus on the outdoors and children will visit the Heath each week. Parents who join the school do so knowing that the outdoors, and enjoying the vagaries of British weather is part of the ethos of the school.</p> <p>Abacus is a real state secular primary school already. It currently has about 90 pupils and in September 2016 it will have 120 4-8 year olds being taught in this Ofsted outstanding school. In September 2017 there will be 150 4-9 year old pupils. The consequences of not approving this planning application are severe and real. There is not enough room for Abacus pupils to stay in its temporary site beyond Sept 2017. There are no other suitable sites available: an extensive search over many years by several agencies, including Camden Council, for suitable sites in Belsize or nearby, finally led to the Police Station being found as a permanent site for the school. Dispersing 150 4-9 years olds to schools across Camden in September 2017 could be one of the very real consequences of this planning application failing. Provisional data from May 2016 shows that the first 30 offers of reception places for Abacus in September 2016 were all to children living within Belsize ward.</p> <p>Belsize Ward continues to have one of the highest birth rates of all of the wards in Camden. For example, in 2009, the birth year of some of our first class of Abacus Belsize children, there were 243 births in Belsize ward. Swiss cottage and Haverstock wards, which abut Belsize, also have similarly high birth rates compared to the rest of Camden.</p>

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					<p>The population in Camden continues to grow.</p> <p>A conservative estimate is of a 3% predicted increase in 4-10 year olds by 2023. This will have the consequence of filling up all schools in Camden, including the ones that children in Belsize have been offered places in when none are available locally.</p> <p>Please support this planning application.</p>
2016/1590/P	Rachel Peacock	2 Heath Hurst Road	07/05/2016 20:23:54	OBJ	<p>There are over 50 schools in the NW3 area already. The proposed school is not in the Belsize area to which it supposed to serve. Downshire Hill and Rosslyn Hill are already at maximum capacity traffic wise and even a small amount of additional traffic will endanger the existing school children crossing these roads. The sustainable commuting promoted by Abacus is nonsense as it can't be enforced. If planning permission is granted all realistic future traffic control will be lost. Families will rent near to the school to gain places, then as families expand, move out to more affordable areas, then resort to driving children to school. It isn't fair to the residents of Hampstead to have to accommodate a further school for the residents of Belsize Park. Wouldn't the Fire Station have been a viable site?. I don't disagree that Belsize Park needs a state school, but if the application is approved Belsize Park still won't have a state school, but there will just be yet another school in Hampstead! The air quality in the Hampstead area is already poor, how can it be viable to invite yet more traffic? The modern aesthetics of the low quality, huge side extension of the proposed building along Downshire Hill will destroy the character of this street and impact also the character of Rosslyn Hill. School buildings are by nature cost effective in construction materials and I would ask what effort the proposed extension makes to blend in or contribute to the aesthetics of the area. Downshire Hill must be one of the most beautiful streets in London, if you can't safeguard this then what is worth preserving? Abacus are obviously using the tactic of asking for a site of 420 pupils in order to gain approval for a scaled down number, but even a school of 200 hundred pupils would be a disaster for the area.</p>
2016/1590/P	Rachel Peacock	2 Heath Hurst Road	07/05/2016 20:23:32	OBJ	