

CALTHORPE STREET RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (WC1)

22a Calthorpe Street WC1X0JS. [REDACTED]

Zenab Haji-Ismail

Camden Council Planning Department

Your ref: 2015/3049/P re 51 Calthorpe Street WC1

Dear Ms Haji-Ismail

Yet again, on behalf of Calthorpe Street Residents Association (and with the support of Mount Pleasant Association and the newly formed Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum) I write to object to the proposed plans for 51 Calthorpe Street.

The proposal is to convert the existing structure into flats, to increase the basement area in both depth and overall width and length to accommodate more flats, and to increase the roof level by one floor, to accommodate even more flats.

1. The existing building, formerly known as the Old School House, whilst not listed, is considered by Camden to be a "building of merit". Although few, if any, of the original interior features remain, the exterior has a pleasant late Georgian/early Victorian frontage in the "classical" mode, apparently by a known architect who worked locally within the neighbourhood (*see applicant's own submission*).

Our concern is that the proposed works, which are extensive, will put too much pressure on this old structure (principally extra load-bearing on the roof and extra weight on the foundations), whilst the requisite pile-driving to excavate the proposed new basement will shake and damage this old structure.

We think the amount of accommodation being proposed for this old building is greedy and excessive, and that the proposed works can fatally damage this building of merit.

As the planning committee knows, co-incidental collapse of old buildings during "development" is often a developer's ruse (or "intended consequence") of over-development, in order to release the land from prohibitive planning restriction. We would of course hope that the developer has no such intention, but the planners should bear this "un-intentional" consequence in mind.

2. The existing building (51 Calthorpe Street) abuts a listed terrace of houses, most of which are owned/leased by Camden Council and which provide residential housing. This listed terrace is in a relatively fragile condition; it was badly shaken by the pile-driving and construction work on the Holiday Inn and had to be pinned and repaired. The terrace is leaning off kilter, being now raised at one end and sinking at the other, and is twisted off true building line. (*see your records of required repairs since 1980*). Nevertheless this terrace is listed, it provides housing (both social and private) and is an essential and attractive part of the neighbourhood.

The occupants are extremely worried that the proposed building works at 105 Calthorpe Street, particularly the proposed basement extension, will further damage this listed terrace, maybe irrevocably. The potential threat to this listed terrace is of serious concern, and the planners should take this issue on board.

3. The proposal to increase the roof line is unacceptable in a conservation area. You have refused similar applications in the neighbourhood (ie the former Pakenham Arms on the corner of Calthorpe and Pakenham Streets) and we ask you to refuse this application for an extra floor, for similar reasons.
4. 51 Calthorpe Street, at the back (north) overlooks the gardens of residents in Pakenham Street. They have asked us to voice their collective objection to the proposed increase of height of the building and the proposed over-development of residences within the building on the grounds of Right to Light and lack of privacy.
5. The proposed amount of flats within this relatively modest building is excessive. There appears to be no provision for parking. In our opinion the residential component is excessive, and will put undue strain on services and parking, to the detriment of the neighbourhood.
6. Although there is an acknowledged housing crisis, it appears to us that this developer, in his wish to capitalise on the housing market is attempting to cram too many tiny residential units within a modest footprint. We think these are potential slums of the future. Whilst there is no rent control over the private housing market we see developments like this as exploitative.

We ask the planners to scrutinise the proposed housing provision with care, to make sure it complies with legal housing requirements. We also ask the planner to note that we think the proposed housing provision on this modest site is excessive. We ask the planners to limit the amount of proposed housing on this site to a lower and more acceptable level.

7. Infrastructure. As we have pointed out in former objections, the land-surface in this area has instability and the River Fleet, (which although encased, leaks) runs adjacent, if not under, the site in question. (*see your records of i) building problems with subsidence Holiday Inn 1980s ii) ground work reports (various) on proposed development of Mount Pleasant from 1980-2016*).

For the above reasons, yet again, we ask you to reject this planning application out of hand.

Yours faithfully

Judy Dainton

(Secretary CSRA, exec committee member MPA, Chair MP Neighbourhood Forum)