

**24 Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, London NW3 1PD**

30<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Planning Solutions Team,  
London Borough of Camden,  
Town Hall,  
Judd Street,  
London WC1 H9JE

Case Officer Zenab Haji-Ismail

Dear Zenab Haji-Ismail,

**Planning Application No. 2016/1590/P**

As a Hampstead resident I wish to state my absolute objection to the Abacus Belsize Primary school being located in the Hampstead Police Station. Whilst I recognise that Belsize Park needs a primary school it should be located in Belsize Park and not in the middle of the Hampstead Conservation area.

I have read through most of the letters posted on your Camden site, both the 'For' and 'Against' and have come to the conclusion that this change of use into a large primary school just doesn't make sense!!!

Yes, there is a definite need for a primary school in Belsize Park there is no argument about that. However, and this is beyond my comprehension, why place a large 420 pupil school out of its catchment area in this prestigious building just because Abacus haven't found an alternative site for 60 pupils? If this project goes ahead the end result will be more traffic congestion which is already severe; intolerable noise for local residents; more pollution; excessive costs; overcrowding - all representing chaos to the whole of Hampstead and beyond.

My objections are based on:-

**Need**

- There are already 37 schools in Hampstead with over 10,000 pupils. It has one of the highest concentration of schools in the country.
- The Council is on record as saying it has enough school places for every child for the next 10 years.
- Chief Councillor for Children Angela Mason said 'There was no need for a new school in NW3 and questioned the decision by the Department of Education to fund the project in the first place'. *Camden New Journal 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016.*

**Hampstead Police Station**

The Police Station is totally inappropriate for a primary school for the following reasons:

- a. There is not enough outside space

- b. It is in the wrong position being on the corner of the one of the busiest junctions in Hampstead and facing on to a main road
- c. Will cost millions of pounds to convert
- d. The new design is an eyesore in that is totally out of keeping for a Grade 11 listed building in the middle of a Conservation area and is completely out of scale with the surrounding historical properties most of which are listed.
- e. The school facing directly on to Rosslyn Hill will be affected by the noise and pollution of constant traffic

I can think of many alternative uses for this prestigious building (which is so much a part of Hampstead) to enhance rather than diminish the Conservation area:- Affordable accommodation for nurses and researchers from the Royal Free; a community centre with a Police front desk so desperately needed in Hampstead; consultant/office rooms to rent and perhaps a cultural centre in the Court Room.

#### Traffic Congestion

I have lived in Rosslyn Hill for over 20 years and during that time have seen the traffic increase to a point where it is sometimes almost impossible to get out of my drive. Rosslyn Hill is one of the main arteries into London. It is heavily congested in the mornings and late afternoons with school runs and cars going into London during the rush hour. The development would disrupt the main flow of traffic into London and could bring it to a virtual standstill. It is the main route for ambulances to and from the Royal Free Hospital which is one of the busiest A & E services in London. If stuck in traffic this could mean a matter of 'Life or Death'

Disruption to the area would be further exacerbated by large lorries going to the new Piers development for building works at the Royal Free. In addition there will be the extra traffic caused by the future HS2.

The applicants maintain there will be no increase in traffic as it is a car free school and parents and pupils will walk or take public transport. This is not credible as the catchment area ranges from Cricklewood to Regents Park and from Kilburn to Kentish Town. This is not a local school. The idea of young children with siblings in pushchairs walking to Hampstead from a number of miles away is clearly not feasible. Many will arrive by car as there is no enforcement to stop them causing even more traffic chaos in an area already suffering from extreme congestion problems.

**NB Camden's Planning Policy No.16.15 'In areas with an existing problem with the school run, it is unlikely that the Council will grant planning permission for educational facilities that are likely to exacerbate the problem.'**

#### Pavement Congestion

The congestion issue is not only limited to cars but also to pedestrians. Living on Rosslyn Hill I can realistically give the facts. Rosslyn Hill is the main pedestrian thoroughfare to The Royal Free Hospital, The Keats Doctors' Practice; for people going to and from work; walking to the stations together with the numerous children rushing to their various schools in Hampstead. From 8.00-9.30 in the morning the pavements are overcrowded. Now add 600/800 parents and children with scooters, bicycles and pushchairs descending en masse onto Rosslyn Hill and Downshire Hill you can imagine the mayhem it will cause. It will be virtually impossible for anyone to walk on the pavements.

### Noise Pollution

The noise from screaming, shouting children on the rooftop playground would be audible from Pilgrims Lane to Pond Street. This particular area of Hampstead has the effect of an amphitheatre and the noise will resonate down to the Heath. The school have stated they will be staggering children's playtime as there isn't enough room for all the pupils at the same time. This would mean that this tranquil enclave at the heart of Hampstead's Conservation area will suffer from noise pollution throughout the day. Abacus have not taken into account or even care that a large number of the residents work from home or are retired.

### What about the Children?

- This is a very large intimidating building and utterly unsuitable for young children who need a nurturing family ethos with a more intimate environment.
- The Rooftop playground facing North is open to all elements with little or no protected/secluded areas. Children will feel 'caged in' surrounded by wire or walls. What about the children who suffer from vertigo and those with special needs? This is not an inner city school with lack of space. It is just the wrong building in the wrong place.
- Pollution is high in Hampstead, twice the recommended level, and will get significantly worse. The school is located on a busy main road with classrooms facing directly on to traffic. This will be a worrying health hazard for all the children. Pollution can cause asthma. **'One in every 11 children in the UK has asthma.'** Action Medical Research for Asthma
- This site is dangerous for young children. The school has no frontage other than a narrow pavement straight on to Downshire Hill and for the most part in Rosslyn Hill. It would be extremely dangerous for young children who in the crowds of people can easily be distracted and run into the road in front of oncoming cars. There are also numerous hidden driveways in Rosslyn Hill where motorists reverse out. It is difficult for drivers to see small children especially if they are running or scooting at speed.

**Finally I would like to point out that Hampstead Village is one of the most celebrated and beautiful areas in London, unique in appearance, ambiance and history. It has been justifiably described as 'The Jewel in London's Crown' If this insane plan is approved it will change the face of Hampstead forever. Surely you must respect and treasure its legacy for the sake of the future generation.**

I sincerely hope you will take into account my objections to this hasty and ill thought through proposal and ask that the Planning Department reject it.

Yours faithfully,



Sandra Joseph