

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/1590/P	Janine Griffis	14 Denning Rd NW3 1SU NW3 1SU NW3 1SU	16/05/2016 09:04:47	OBJ	<p>On behalf of the Pilgrim's to Willoughby Residents Association, I would like to address two significant issues with this application and to make several recommendations.</p> <p>Impact on the "school run"</p> <p>Camden's emerging Local Plan recognises the high concentration of schools in Belsize Park and Hampstead and the negative impact that the resultant school run has on the area. In paragraph 4.32, the plan states:</p> <p>Hampstead and Belsize Park have a very high concentration of schools where significant issues exist concerning the 'school run'. We will refuse applications for new schools or the expansion of existing schools in these areas, unless it can be demonstrated the number of traffic movements will not increase.</p> <p>We have concerns that The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted by the applicant does this.</p> <p>The report states, "While, the school recognises that it cannot exclude children whose parents do not comply with a 'nocar' policy, they can use positive incentives to support and encourage healthy and sustainable travel."</p> <p>It seems clear that while the school is sincere and committed in promoting sustainable modes of traffic through education and enthusiasm, there are "no teeth" in this 'no-car' policy and there are issues with some of the evidence provided. The school suggests that it is exploring the option of using staff as traffic wardens but gives no concrete assurance that the school will commit to this practise over the life of the school or that this practise will stop parents from driving and parking a block away.</p> <p>The TA states that the furthest point in the catchment area is only a distance of 1.2 miles, a 20-minute walk. An adult, walking steadily and on flat ground, perhaps can walk this but not a child, and not uphill.</p> <p>It also is incorrect to conclude that just because a child lives within walking distance that they will actually use that mode of transport. The National Travel Survey of 2013 found that 20% of all trips (walking, bike, public transport, private transport) of under 1 mile were made by car. If these same statistics were applied to the eventual capacity of the school, this would translate to 84 children arriving and departing by car every day. Even half this number would be significant as just a few cars inconsiderately parked can be hugely disruptive in a small area.</p> <p>The school cites its current experience as evidence that its student body will behave in a responsible manner but residents of Hampstead have their own experiences to prove that parents of primary children do not always behave in a responsible way (please see the current school run congestion near the New End Primary and Christchurch Primary).</p> <p>It is incumbent on the proposed Abacus Belsize Primary School not to state its good intentions but to demonstrate that traffic movements will not increase (Camden's words).</p>

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Lastly, is this school in the right place? Is it fair to ask residents in one area to shoulder the burden of a school in their neighbourhood when their children will not even be permitted to apply? The position of the school outside the catchment area is not conducive to a sustainable traffic plan but the larger question is whether this school is needed in this area at all. Camden projects growth in the population of children age 0-17 between 2013 and 2023 in Belsize Park to be just 3%, or roughly just 70 children, a number far short of the 420 that this school will eventually cater to.

Recommendation: If it can be demonstrated that the school is needed, we feel strongly that the catchment area must be re-drawn in order to take in those streets in the immediate vicinity of the school.

We also point out that resident parking restrictions in the neighbouring streets does not begin until 9 a.m. Local residents may not wish these hours to change but the possibility of legal parking during the morning school run period will undermine the school's 'nocar' policy.

Recommendation: Should permission for the school go ahead, Camden should consult with local residents in the nearby streets to see if they would be willing to change the hours of resident parking restrictions.

Damage to a listed building

The courtroom is an important example of how the British legal system operated throughout much of the 20th century, with prisoners being taken from the cells to be arraigned the next day in the courtroom nearby and then back down the rear staircase to the cells in the adjoining block. The courtroom remains untouched from those days and is, or was until recently, in perfect condition.

The proposal which calls for turning the magistrates' court into a classroom, would destroy the essence of what is interesting and important about this room: the dock, the public galleries and the table for the magistrate and the relationship between these features. As the Heritage Statement acknowledges, the space has a "highly specific courtroom arrangement". Removing the interior furniture would destroy the courtroom aspect and result in a nicely paneled room with no other resonance of past usage.

Contrary to the assertions made in the Heritage Statement, the demolition of the interior would cause substantial harm to this heritage asset, contrary to NPPF 132: "As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional."

In the past, the courtroom has been used for educational purposes to show young people how the court system works and to encourage them to learn more about the legal system. The courtroom should be preserved as it is, as an important educational resource, and remain protected for future generations.

Recommendation: Should permission for the school go ahead, the plans should be modified to preserve

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the original furniture and configuration of the courtroom as an asset not only for the school but for the wider community.

We urge the Council to reject this proposal and thank you for your consideration.

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