

Ms Tania Skelli-Yaoz
Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

Date: 18.05.2016

Dear Ms Skelli-Yaoz

Re: Application No. 2016/2265/P

I write with respect to the above planning application. As the parent of a current and a future child at Eleanor Palmer Primary School, I unreservedly support the school's initiative to build a new science laboratory. A dedicated purpose-built space will significantly improve the quality and ambition of the school's science teaching, and is justifiably a high priority for the school.

The plans as currently drafted are, in my view, unobjectionable with respect to the building's appearance. They are not, however, fit for purpose. Several parents have commented on the inexplicable decision to install glass windows into the façade facing the school playground. This will result in a constant barrage of footballs and other objects crashing against the windows – during science lessons, during other programmed activities taking place there, and when the facility is empty. Alternatively (but no less seriously), it may ultimately be deemed necessary to prevent this by placing restrictions on children's playground activities at certain times of day, or indeed throughout the day.

Another objection to the installation of windows at low level along this façade is that it makes the space less flexible and adaptable. If in future new storage units need to be installed, new equipment purchased, space found for aquaria or other scientific aides, or the facility needs to be temporarily or permanently reconfigured to improve its functioning, the options will be limited as a result of the positioning of these windows. This is unnecessary, as other ways of introducing natural light are available.

Several of these problems could have been addressed if the architects had carried out a consultation with stakeholders, as their promotional literature claims to have done. I wish to place on record that this claim is false. The plans were put on display for parents and children from 11 to 14 April, with a prior announcement that they would then be submitted unchanged to the Council's planning department on 15 April. Comments were invited, but not with a view to responding to them or adjusting the plans accordingly. This was a classic case of a box-ticking exercise, whose sole purpose was to demonstrate "consultation" in aid of what was in fact a *fait accompli*. It is sad that it resulted in the

architects letting themselves and the school down by prematurely submitting plans for a building that is so much inferior to the one they could have delivered.

I hope that in considering these plans, you will make clear to both the school and the architects that you fully support their ambitions to create a much-needed new science laboratory, but that more work will be need to be done to ensure the building is fit for purpose, as it currently is not. Please forgive the anonymous nature of this letter, the reasons for which I trust you will understand.

Yours faithfully,