

Mr R Lester
Planning and Development Team
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Our Ref: JAC/DI/11816

4th October 2016

Dear Mr Lester,

RE: OBJECTION LETTER IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSAL AT FLAXMAN TERRACE R/O 137 EUSTON ROAD, LONDON, WC1H 9BL (REFERENCE: 2016/4414/P)

I write regarding the above application submitted to the Camden Council in September 2016 and seeking permission for the erection of a 4 storey building to provide a new 2 bedroom dwellinghouse. This objection is submitted on behalf of our client, The Place (Contemporary Dance Trust).

The previous application

In the first instance, we highlight the reasons for refusal stated as part of the previous application which sought permission for the erection of a similar four-storey two bedroom property with roof terrace (reference 2015/1579/P). One of the most noticeable differences in the proposals is the projection of the proposed dwelling beyond the front elevation of 16 Flaxman Terrace. Whilst the revised application has reduced this projection by approximately 2 metres, the proposal will still have an unacceptable level of impact upon the amenity of the locality and adjacent property, The Place. In particular, we refer to the reason for refusal which is stated as follows:

"The proposal, by virtue of its scale, projection beyond the main building line and detailed design would appear overly dominant and incongruous to the detriment of the streetscene and the character and appearance of Bloomsbury Conservation Area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and to policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies."

In this respect, a number of consultation responses were received as part of the previous application including an objection from the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee on the basis

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that the scheme would be highly visible and have a negative impact on Flaxman Court (a positive contributor). In addition to this, the board have raised concerns in respect of the loss of light to the occupants of The Place. Given the similarity of the previous and revised scheme, we submit that this is still the case.

We also highlight that the applicant has made no amendments to the 'Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing report' submitted as part of the previous application which fails to consider the direct impacts upon The Place. In particular, we make reference to section 1.6 of the report which clearly illustrates how the proposed development will obstruct the window along the eastern elevation of The Place (see below).

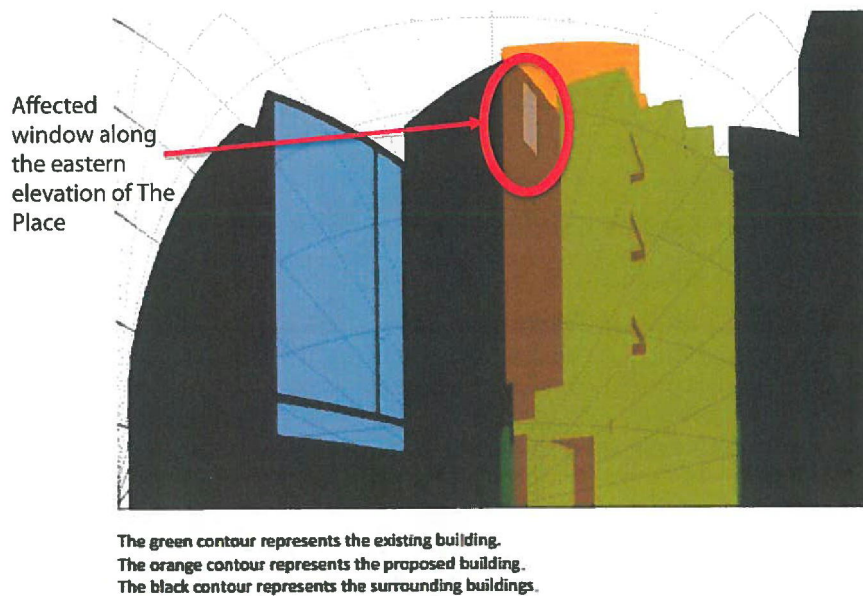


Fig. 1 Extract from the Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing report showing how the proposed development will obstruct the existing window along the eastern elevation of The Place

Circumstances of the occupiers at The Place (The Contemporary Dance Trust)

16 Flaxman Terrace is occupied by The Place (Contemporary Dance Trust) which has been one of the world's leading centres for dance since 1969. The Trust purchased the freehold of The Place in 1979, which includes the site at Flaxman Terrace in 1976 and renovation works began in 1990 providing the existing structure which is seen today.



The Place incorporates a 300 seat theatre and 11 dance studios and houses a range of learning and access programmes including evening and weekend classes catering for people of all ages. Undergraduate and post-graduate programmes alone, cater for up to 180 students as well as employing dancers, teachers, producers and administrators.

Paragraph 10.15 of the Council's Core Strategy (2010-2015) states that leisure facilities such as The Place serve Camden's residents as well as those who work and visit the Borough and are therefore protected and encouraged by policy CS10. Given the significance of The Place in playing a vital role in the development of dance in the UK, any development which could affect the operation of the unit should be considered of significant weight in decision-making.

Further to this, an article was recently published by 'Planning Resource' (28th September 2016) stating that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has promised to "beef up" the London Plan so that developers would have to make sure that any new residential schemes do not threaten the future of existing leisure venues' which further reiterates the importance of protecting leisure facilities.

Impacts of the development proposal

The main entrance to The Place consists of a four-storey glass frontage which enjoy full range views along Flaxman Terrace and Bidborough Street (see figure 2). As aforementioned, the proposed development will protrude approximately 1.3 metres from the front elevation of The Place and therefore having a significant impact upon its setting and outlook.

It is evident that the main entrance of The Place has been designed to act as a focal point when viewed from the east, particularly from Bidborough Street (see figure 3). The introduction of a new frontage in this location will spoil the current "sense of arrival" provided by The Place thus having a negative impact on the appearance of the property, the street scene and Conservation Area. Harm to a Heritage asset should be considered a matter of significant weight.



Fig. 2 View of The Place and application site from the east



Fig. 3 View looking towards The Place and the application site from Bidborough Street



We also note that the proposed plans submitted as part of the application include the insertion of openings on the front elevation of the property to create a “bay-window” feature. This includes the insertion of windows directly opposite the entrance of The Place at first, second and third storey levels, all serving habitable rooms (bedrooms and living areas). This will result in the direct overlooking into the glazed front element of the building which is clearly illustrated in the visuals submitted as part of the application.

The figures below illustrate the view from the windows facing the entrance of The Place. Given that this frontage is only approximately 7 metres from the frontage of The Place, this proximity will create significant overlooking and a sense of intrusion that will be harmful to the necessary creativity and concentration within the dance environment.



Fig. 4 Submitted visuals annotated to show the potential overlooking

As part of the applicant’s submissions, they have completely failed to consider that part of the unit will block, and therefore totally obscure all daylight and sunlight and views from the third storey window located on the eastern elevation of The Place (see figure 2).

The window currently serves one of the studios which is used on a continual basis between 7am and 10pm, 7 days a week. Whilst only part of this opening will be screened, the proposed property will have full visibility into the studio through the proposed roof terrace and service area. Not only is this a concern in respect of the impacts on daylight, sunlight and amenity of The Place but also a Health and Safety concern through the encroachment on the privacy of studio which is regularly used by dancers ages 11 and upwards.



Furthermore, Policy DP26 of the Camden Development Policies (2010-2015) states that the Council will 'protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to the amenity. Factors to be considered include:

- a) Visual privacy and overlooking;
- b) Overshadowing and outlook;
- c) Sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels;
- d) Noise and vibration levels;
- e) Odour, fumes and dust;
- f) Microclimate; and
- g) The inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.

You will note from the above that we consider the proposal will be harmful to the use, users, visitors and contribution that the facility makes to dance.

In addition to this, we consider that in visual terms the proposals will harm the visual appearance of the street scene, and appear as an incongruous feature in the street scene that spoils the sense of place and arrival at The Place.

We are also concerned that the proposal presents an unacceptable unit of accommodation, where the occupiers would not receive an acceptable level of residential amenity. The unit will inevitably be affected by noise and activity from the dance studio, as well as the regular and continual activity. The habitable rooms will be overlooked and there is little or no genuine useable amenity space.

Our main concern is future complaints against our clients valued educational, arts and leisure facility but the simple reality is that the proposal represents overdevelopment of the site and fails to deliver an acceptable internal and external living environment.

Conclusion

In light of the above, we object to this application on the basis that it will interrupt the street scene and the character of the Conservation Area through the introduction of a dominant structure.

The scheme has failed to address concerns in respect of overlooking to its neighbouring property The Place and will infringe on the privacy of the occupants which have been established on the site since before the 1990's. Given that both local and national planning policy seeks to protect the amenity of leisure facilities, it is respectfully requested that this application be refused planning permission on the basis that it will have a detrimental impact on the appearance, amenity and operation of one of the world's leading centre for dance. We submit that this The Place plays a fundamental part on the Council's economy in respect of workers, students and tourists and its protection is key to preservation of the area.

In addition, and in simple terms, the proposal also represents an overdevelopment of the site, fails to provide a unit that will provide an acceptable internal or external level of amenity and will fail to provide acceptable living conditions.



We do not consider that the level of harm can be off-set or mitigated by conditions, and planning permission should therefore be refused.

I trust that the above is explanatory but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

John Collins

[Redacted contact information]