

Kate Phillips
Senior Planning Officer
Regeneration & Planning Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 8ND

21st December 2016

Dear Kate

Planning application ref 2016/1027/P 47 Doughty Street

I am writing further to my letter of 30th March 2016 with regard to the above planning application and on behalf of the Charles Dickens Museum.

I have examined the revised plans in detail, and while I am pleased to see the reduction in the extent of the proposed basement excavation, I continue to have significant concerns about the proposed demolition of the existing closet wing and the plans for the new extension.

As highlighted in my previous letter, the closet wing of 47 Doughty Street, which is proposed to be demolished, is actually built right up against, and overlapping onto, the rear elevation of 48 Doughty Street (see images 1 and 2), the Grade I listed building in which Charles Dickens lived – his only surviving house in London – and which holds the collection of the Charles Dickens Museum.

Despite the changes to the plans for the basement and new extension, the proposed development at 47 Doughty Street remains extensive and – according to the applicant's Construction Management Plan – would involve major demolition, excavation, percussive piling, and construction, including significant work along the party wall with 48 Doughty Street. Given the exceptional nature of the adjacent Charles Dickens Museum, this would seem to be a situation in which the Construction Management Plan must be extremely thorough and appropriate; it is not. According to the documentation submitted by the applicant and his advisers, the works would cause substantial noise, dust, debris, emissions, vibration and other disruption to neighbouring properties. The vibration levels alone, as detailed in my letter of 30th March 2016, would most likely cause significant structural damage to the Museum building and would most certainly pose a safety risk to Museum visitors, staff and volunteers. Moreover, the closet wing forms part of the boundary wall and therefore any demolition would render the garden, which forms part of the Museum's café, unusable (see image 3).

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The Charles Dickens Museum Limited of 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX acting as the sole trustee of The Dickens House and the Dickens House Fund (registered charity number 212172) of the same address

The proposed development would have major construction impacts in any circumstance, but I would ask you to take into consideration the very special nature of the neighbour at 48 Doughty Street – the building and contents of which comprise a museum of international standing and exceptional quality, which has been operating since 1925.

The proposed development, if planning permission is granted, would have a profound impact on the Museum's ability to operate. The demolition of the closet wing and subsequent new construction, as well as various excavation and structural works, would make it impossible for us to open to the public while the work is underway. As a small charity without any public funding to provide a cushion, we must earn – through admission fees and other trading activities – every penny we need to cover the cost of maintaining this Grade 1 listed building and its irreplaceable collection. Therefore any interruption to our daily trading activities presents a real risk to our ongoing viability and the potential loss of a major cultural asset.

I note that there have been a number of objections, in addition to my own, to both the listed building and planning applications, and a range of major concerns remain unresolved by the revised plans. Given the objections, this would seem to be a case in which the additional level of enforcement of a section 106 legal agreement would be essential, should planning permission be granted.

I regret that I must maintain my objection to the proposed development as set out in the revised plans. I would be grateful if you would let me know that date of the Committee meeting in due course.

With best wishes



Dr Cindy Sughrue OBE
Director

cc Catherine Bond, Principal Planner (Conservation & Heritage)
London Borough of Camden

enc photos attached



Image 1: closet wing of 47 Doughty Street from the garden of the Charles Dickens Museum at 48 Doughty Street.



Image 2: detail showing closet wing of 47 Doughty Street overlapping onto the rear elevation of 48 Doughty Street, the Grade I listed home of Charles Dickens.



Closet wing of 47 Doughty Street taken from Charles Dickens Museum garden café.