



10A SOUTH GROVE
HIGHGATE
LONDON
N6 6BS

January 24th, 2017

Charlotte Meynell,
Planning Solutions Team,
Development Management,
London Borough of Camden,
Camden Town Hall,
Judd Street,
London WC2H 9JE

By email

Dear Ms. Meynell,

Re: 2016/6412/P, 49 Highgate High Street, N6 5JX

This submission in respect of the above application is made on behalf of The Highgate Society.

The applicant, Mrs. Sancha von Erlach, seeks permission to make commercial minor alterations, residential conversion and residential minor alterations to the property so as to change the use of the rear of the ground floor, at present a shop with storage accommodation to the rear, to residential accommodation "in association with the first and second floor flat." It includes the installation of a replacement shop front and the installation of two ground floor windows to the south elevation facing Pond Square.

This will involve the relocation of the existing residential entrance, at present facing Highgate High Street, to Pond Square. There is already an existing entrance to the rear of the shop from Pond Square, and the proposal seeks to utilize it to provide access to the residential unit. It is also proposed to reinstate a previously bricked-up sash window, and to replace a second small existing window with a sash window enlarged to match the sash window already in place. Thus the door would have a sash window on either side.

The Proposed Shop:

Although the new shopfront appears to be an improvement—a full-width treatment sympathetically designed—the resulting shop area is reduced to 35.2 metres, with no W.C. facilities and little if any storage space. It is difficult to envisage what sort of business could occupy such a limited space on Highgate High Street—another small estate agency perhaps? It would be difficult for any useful retail business to operate there.

Moreover, according to the Design and Access Statement “The project includes the addition of an internal partitioning wall on the ground floor level to create a clear separation between the retail unit now accessed from Pond Square.” This means that all deliveries to the shop will have to be made via Highgate High Street, thereby adding to the congestion of what is already a very busy and often traffic-clogged road.

The Residential Unit:

The proposed unit would be accessed from the Pond Square entrance, with a newly relocated timber staircase leading to the first floor. There is a new living room at ground floor level, behind the now completely separate shop, a living room, kitchen and new bathroom at first floor level, and three bedrooms and a second bathroom at second floor level.

It is of interest that the ground floor “living room” is shown in the plan to include a lavatory and also a kitchen unit with a sink and cooker. There is already a large kitchen on the floor above. There is thus a possibility that with only very minor alterations this new accommodation, carved out of the existing rear of the shop and storage area, and which has its own access from the lobby, could be used as a self-contained studio flat, and not as an integral part of the two-story maisonette above. This could lead to a much denser occupation of the residential space than is possible at present.

For this reason the Highgate Society objects to the application unless conditions can be imposed limiting the occupancy of the residential unit behind and above the shop. In addition, the very small retail space remaining in the shop fronting Highgate High Street is unlikely to be used in such a way as to sustain any commercial enterprise of benefit to the Highgate community.

Yours sincerely,

Arlene Polonsky,
Planning Committee,
Highgate Society.