

[REDACTED]

From: Craig, Tessa
Sent: 15 February 2017 09:07
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Application number: 2017/0075/P Oakshott Court Polygon Road London NW1 1SS

Please upload

Tessa Craig
Planning Officer

Telephone: 020 7974 6750



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 February 2017 23:08
To: Craig, Tessa
Subject: Application number: 2017/0075/P Oakshott Court Polygon Road London NW1 1SS

Dear Ms Craig

Re: Application number: 2017/0075/P
Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 2015/6775/P dated 03/06/16 (for installation of CCTV system) namely to alter the location of the central pole 2m south.

The current application calls into question the original decision about the installation of a CCTV system mounted on 6- and 4-metre-high poles on a normally quiet residential estate. The proposed alteration shows how ill-advised and badly planned the scheme is. The original application was inappropriate and the decision on it perverse, likely influenced by misleading information propagated by the applicant and inappropriate, possibly fraudulent, communications from a senior councillor (details follow).

I would like to urge the council to review the proposal in its entirety, to refuse the proposed alteration and encourage the applicant to find an appropriate and proportionate ways of enhancing residents' safety, security and privacy at Oakshott Court. For instance, by improving the existing CCTV system within parameters of a lawful development, considering proportionate access control which would signify that the common areas of the estate are intended for residents only (there is currently no barrier, or gate that shows pedestrians they are entering a residential estate), installing appropriate signage, better lighting and so on.

I am also urging that because of the harm this proposal will do to residents' enjoyment of their homes and to the council's property, which is a highly respected and historically important example of social architecture produced by Camden's own architecture office in the early 1970s, that the decision is not delegated but, must go to committee.

In view of the likely minimal effect of the proposed installation on criminal or anti-social behaviour, the detrimental impact of the installation on the appearance of the estate and on residents' privacy is unacceptable.

I would like you to review my comments on the conduct and content of the previous application to which the present one refers. I am copying below my letter of 22/03/2016.

Your sincerely,
Anthony Auerbach

[notes on the proposal to install a CCTV system mounted on 6- and 4-metre-high poles at Oakshott Court, 2016, to be considered in relation to the current application for an alteration to the proposal]

I would like you to register the following comments about the proposal 2015/6775/P.

This proposal was submitted on 29 February 2016 as an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness. However, the proposal is not consistent with a lawful development. You told me on 4 March 2016, you had advised the applicant that you could only consider a full planning application and that the proposal had been resubmitted unchanged. You sent a letter to local residents dated 1 March giving notice of a consultation about this planning application. Your letter contained no details of the proposal. You updated the details available on your website to reflect the fact that the proposal is not being considered as lawful development only after my email of 18 March 2016. Until that time, anyone going to your website to find details of the proposal may have got the misleading impression the proposal is lawful. In view of the fact that you have published misleading information about the application, I would first like to ask you extend the consultation period at least until 8 April 2016.

I wrote to you on 4 March 2016 pointing out that the proposal does not satisfy the conditions of the relevant GPDO (2015, F). In brief: the poles are not part of any GPDO, the CCTV installation is not consistent with the specifications at F.1 b, d and does not fulfil the conditions at F.2 a, b.

Because the GPDO may be taken as a guide to what kind of CCTV installations are generally considered permissible and acceptable, proposals that do not conform to those rules must provide specific justification for doing so. The current proposal does not contain any credible, specific justification. The applicant has not said why the existing CCTV system cannot be retained or updated within the permitted development rules.

The proposal includes 4 and 6 metre (13 and 20 ft) high poles erected in prominent positions in the pedestrian pathways and the garden of our estate. The bases of three out of the four proposed poles obstruct the pedestrian pathways of the estate. The fourth pole is placed in a garden area.

On top of the poles are high-definition (HD) pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras. The cameras are positioned higher than roof level of the first two tiers of the building and reach up to the second floor of the top tier. The cameras are close to the building and are designed to look directly into residents' private terraces.

The camera set-up is reminiscent of high-security installations, usually seen together with high fences, razor wire and the like. The proposed installation out of proportion and completely inappropriate for a normally quiet residential area.

CCTV is widely regarded as helpful in preventing anti-social behaviour (although evidence for this is scarce) and can be of assistance to police in crime investigations. I understand why many people welcome CCTV in principle and recognise it can have a role, in combination with other measures such as access control, lighting and signage, in helping keep Oakshott Court a peaceful place.

However, the current proposal is likely to have limited effect because the combination with other possible measures has been neglected and because, while the cameras can be remotely controlled, they are not intended to be monitored. Instead, recordings are kept and may only be used by the police in cases of crime or disorder reported by residents. However, the most common complaints fall short of crime and disorder and CCTV cannot be used.

The assumed deterrent effect of CCTV is questionable, firstly because video surveillance is primarily intended to gather evidence in cases of crime and disorder that actually happen. Secondly, a perceived deterrent effect is usually a result of the displacement of criminal or anti-social behaviour to neighbouring areas but not actually a real reduction. See, for example, Home Office Research Study 292: Assessing the impact of CCTV by Martin Gill and Angela Spriggs (2005).

In view of the likely minimal effect of the proposed installation on criminal or anti-social behaviour, the detrimental impact of the installation on the appearance of the estate and on residents' privacy is unacceptable.

The current proposal has been promoted by Community Intervention Manager Julian Coutts. Mr Coutts has, until submitting this planning application, stubbornly refused to provide residents with details of his proposal and has never provided credible evidence of the effectiveness of CCTV. He has previously insisted (falsely) that consultation is not required and that planning permission is not required for the installation. I understand that the idea of installing CCTV stems from problems that occurred some years ago and that they had been mainly resolved following the eviction of certain 'problem' families. Mr Coutts was unable to say whether CCTV had any role in resolving those issues. I regret that he has not taken the opportunity to reconsider the plans or engage in any constructive discussion with residents. (See below, by way of explanation why such a proposal has finally been submitted to you).

I notice among the documents posted on your website an email sent you on 3 March 2016 by Cllr Jonathan Simpson (Cabinet Member for Community Safety) which purports to be a pledge of support for the proposal from the Ward Councillors Roger Robinson, Samata Khatoon and Paul Tomlinson. Cllr Robinson told me on 21 March 2016 that he was never shown the proposal and has not discussed it with his colleagues. While Cllr Simpson's email may be regarded as reflecting a general opinion about CCTV, it may not be read as approving the present proposal. Why this message was sent by Cllr Simpson and not directly by the Ward Councillors is not explained.

I trust I have explained sufficiently why this proposal is ill-conceived and unjustified and that its detrimental effects are not balanced by any likely benefit. I urge you to refuse planning permission.

Please acknowledge this message.

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Auerbach

(Anthony Auerbach wrote to Julian Coutts 19/08/2015:

Dear Mr Coutts

I am astonished that you appear want to press on with contract about which you have no concrete information and which you are unable to show conforms with the criteria you have set out.

I have pointed out, and I feel I must underline again that

- ∞ your assertion that CCTV is necessary is not documented
- ∞ your assessment that CCTV is the correct and best value-for-money solution to the perceived problem is not documented
- ∞ you have not explained what other measures you have considered to discourage anti-social behaviour
- ∞ your consultation with 'community representatives' is not documented
- ∞ no proper consultation has in fact been conducted among residents (because you have not discussed the problem, alternative solutions, impact or effectiveness of CCTV, or provided any specific details of the proposed installation, even though you have been repeatedly asked for information, moreover you have admitted that part of the information you provided was irrelevant and misleading)
- ∞ your assertion that no planning permission is required is not credible, seeing as you have not provided adequate information on which to form such an opinion (and as far as I can tell are not in possession of such information)
- ∞ the summary you have quoted from Camden's website does not overrule the GPDO 2015 to which I have previously referred and pointed out the conditions included therein
- ∞ the mountings of the cameras you have described are not included of any permitted development order
- ∞ likewise your previous assertion that the installation conforms with other regulations is not documented and is not credible

I am highlighting these things because I believe your conduct is both irresponsible and unaccountable and the consequences may be damaging to the estate. I am calling on Cllr Callaghan, Vicky Morris and the responsible officers of the council to examine this procedure and halt any installation until they are satisfied that the documentation you provide shows that the CCTV is needed, that all the alternatives have been properly assessed and discussed among residents, and that the installation plans are shown to conform with all relevant legislation.)

[comments first submitted 22/03/2016 end]

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Anthony Auerbach

