

[REDACTED]

From: Henry, Kate
Sent: 16 February 2017 08:09
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Cleveland Street Workhouse

Please log as objection to 2017/0414/P

Kate Henry
Senior Planning Officer

Telephone: 0207 974 2521



From: Anthony French [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 February 2017 19:15
To: Henry, Kate
Subject: Cleveland Street Workhouse

Dear Ms Henry

It was with much displeasure, not to say despair, that I heard that the workhouse site on Cleveland Street is *again* under threat from developers. As I am not a Londoner - I write from Yorkshire - I may be accused of not minding my own business but I must nevertheless urge you to resist any application to develop that site, which is of the greatest cultural and historical interest.

My own interest in the area comes from my work on the entomologist John Curtis, who lived on what was then Charles Street; officially Charles Street, Middlesex Hospital.(Please view attached). I have been investigating also the lives of the Debary sisters who lived on Newman Street: they were significantly associated with Jane Austen, who knew them well. I therefore do claim a close interest in that area of London. Add to that the interest everyone must have in the Charles Dickens connection, emphasised recently by a blue plaque on the house he lived in as a boy, and I feel that I do have a claim to a voice, which I raise in protest.

The cemetery, I understand, has already been described as a health hazard, which, I'm sorry to say, rather supports the view of those who believe that this H and S judgement has become a convenient means of expediting "favourable" planning outcomes. But I am sure that you will bring your own objective judgement to bear on that.

I do beg you to consider instigating a full and thorough archaeological investigation of the site before considering any planning application. There was certainly a small industrial estate there which gave employment to locals - including workhouse inmates - and there are without doubt valuable artefacts to be found and evidence which would give us a picture of the lives and work of the people of that area during the opening years of the industrial revolution.

There is something else. Because of its association with literature, the arts and industry it is an area of outstanding historical interest; it was part of a much larger area which has shrunk, after the destruction of buildings during the Blitz and recent building development, to a small but very precious part of London. I would suggest to you that post-Brexit, with the eyes of the trading world on London and warnings (from Germany especially) that London can no longer automatically regard itself as the major financial centre and gateway to Europe it was, speculative building in Fitzrovia may no longer attract as its customers the billionaires which it once did. In fact the long-term tourist income from developing the site as a world-famous heritage site would probably be greater than that provided by absentee millionaire tenants....

I do hope that you will consider the points I have made, and recognise that very strong opposition to any further development in that fragile area of London is justified; and that I, as a non-Londoner, have no vested interest except that of an historian who loves that area and asks for your support in preserving it for the best of reasons.

Yours sincerely

Tony French