



Jonathan McClue
Planning Solutions Team
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

Sent by email: jonathan.mcclue@camden.gov.uk

21 February 2017

Our ref: 17 02 03

Dear Jonathan McClue,

2015/6955/P Redevelopment of the site following partial demolition of Panther House and Brain Yard buildings, partial demolition of 160-164 Gray's Inn Road and demolition of 156 Gray's Inn Road at Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X

The above application has been brought to the attention of the Twentieth Century Society. We wish to **object** to the application and fully support the comments of Historic England in their letter of 13 January 2016. We also urge that planning permission is refused in this case, due to the harm that the proposals will have on a conservation area, and on two twentieth century buildings of local significance. We hope that our comments can be taken into consideration at this stage.

Proposals

The application proposes the total demolition of 156 Gray's Inn Road, and the substantial demolition of 160-4 Gray's Inn Road, with only some of the façade retained. The proposals further entail the construction of a new building immediately behind the retained façade, which will be significantly taller in height, and will span across the Brain Yard entrance and infill the site of the existing 156 Gray's Inn Road.

Significance

Although neither building is locally listed, the Society considers that both buildings are of local architectural and historic merit, and contribute strongly to the character of the designated area.

160-4 Gray's Inn Road is described as a 'shop-front of merit' in the area appraisal. It is a well-proportioned two-storey building in the moderne style with a stone parapet and with retail units facing the street at ground level. We understand that at least one of these units retains an original timber shop-front. We agree with Historic England's assertion that the height of the building, rather than being a 'shortcoming' as is suggested by the applicant, is in fact a positive quality. It provides variety in the streetscape and reveals layers of the area's history – such as the painted Gillette advertisement to the side of the adjacent building.

To the north east across the Brain Yard entrance is 156 Gray's Inn Road, with an interesting original purpose as a tram mess building making it a unique register of the historic use of the site. In height it provides a gradual step up to the Tiverton Mansions. It is a dignified building of high quality stone and brick, with an unusual dual entrance at street level. The central curved bay of the first and second floor balances the lower configuration, and as a whole the building is of significant interest.

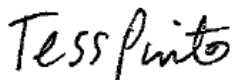
Twentieth Century Society Comment

The Society considers that the proposals will cause substantial harm to the conservation area. We consider that the total demolition of 156 Gray's Inn Road would cause substantial harm due to the buildings local historic interest and architectural distinction. We further object to the proposed façade retention of 160-4 Gray's Inn Road, and to the size, massing and treatment of the proposed new building that would be constructed directly behind the façade. We consider that it would not only dominate the retained façade of the 1920s building, but also the row of mansions to each side through its size, massing and stark material treatment in an area which is defined by a palette of stone and brick.

We consider that the proposals are contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

The Society therefore objects to the proposals. I would appreciate if you could keep me informed of the progress of this application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Tess Pinto
Conservation Adviser
Twentieth Century Society

Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.