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From: Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 March 2017 13:02
To: Planning
Cc: Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association; Charlotte Street Assoc.; Harrison, Adam (Councillor); Madlani, Rishi (Councillor); Francis, Sabrina (Councillor); Henry, Kate
Subject: Comments on Application number: 2017/0414/P and 2017/0415/L - Middlesex Hospital Annex, 44 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JT

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In general terms the principle of developing the site for housing (including intermediate and social rented) offices and open space is acceptable. We are pleased the scheme is to be a car-free development with no on-site or off-site parking permitted except for disabled badge holders. However we strongly object to the application because it fails to provide sufficient housing and public open space. While the bulk of the site and overall design is on balance acceptable, we have concerns about many design aspects of the new build and the negative impact on important historical elements of the site.

Housing: We are disappointed by the amount of housing and public open space proposed. The large amount of office space planned (40 percent of the build) is too high and this has negatively impacted on space for housing and public open space.

Reference is made by the applicants in the planning statement to the recent appeal decision upheld by a planning inspector on the nearby Arthur Stanley House (ASH). UCLH Charity were also the applicants for that site. The applicants say that the appeal decision reinforces the land use mix proposed for the Middlesex Hospital Annex (MHA) site.

However, we note that the inspector made reference to the 16 units expected at ASH and 58 units expected at the MHA and that the opportunity sites should be looked at together in context. When allowing the appeal for ASH the inspector stated that the delivery of only 12 units at ASH was not at odds with the expected 16 units because the council anticipated delivery of 58 at MHA. However, only 50 units are proposed at MHA.

If we look at the two sites together:

ASH will provide only 26 percent of the approx 6,668 sqm gea floorspace as housing and MHA is providing 60 percent of the approx 9,436 sqm gea floorspace as housing.

Commercial is 5,075 sqm gea at ASH, and 4,361 sqm gea at MHA (total: 9,436).

Residential is 1,853 sqm gea at ASH, and is 4,815 sqm gea at MHA (total: 6,668).

Out of the 16,104 sqm gea from these two former publicly owned hospital sites only 6,668 sqm gea or 41 percent of the land use will be housing.

Taken together the majority land use on these two sites is commercial not housing despite both sites being identified for housing. This also goes against policy DP1 (mixed use) which requires 50 percent housing.

Taken together the two sites will deliver, without question, predominantly commercial uses. The proposal will undermine the council's ambition for housing and not serve the needs of the community in Fitzrovia.

On this aspect alone the application should be refused.

Design: While we are pleased with the retention of the listed workhouse building we object to the design of the new build which faces it. We are particularly concerned about the brash corner details and the large expanse of glass at ground floor and upper levels where they face the listed building. We would have expected a more sensitive design to allow a transition from the modern buildings at Charlotte Street to the historical and intimate setting of the workhouse.

Archaeology: There are no plans for any archaeological investigation on this site. This should be a requirement particularly as there is evidence of an historic graveyard on the site and possible human remains still present.

While the proposed scheme has some merits it fails to fulfill the potential to provide an acceptable proposal in land use and design terms, and also fails to protect important heritage and archaeological assets. We recommend that this application be refused.

Regards

Linus Rees
director and trustee

