MOUNT PLEASANT ASSOCIATION

and

CALTHORPE STREET RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

To: Kate Henry

Planning Officer, Camden Council

Date: March 13th 2017

Your ref: 2015/3049/P re 51 Calthorpe Street

Dear Ms Henry

Thank you for your letter of March 3rd referring to this planning application. I have delayed my reply to read your recommendation when your comments were posted on the Council website. I have now read your report, with some surprise and dismay.

I note that, although we have always been amongst those who have objected repeatedly to various applications concerning this building, we were not informed of the appeal hearing, to which your recommendation refers. Therefore, the planning inspector was not made aware of our local opposition to these proposals. We would ask for your explanation of this omission.

I note that your recommendation refers to the inspector’s concerns about provision of affordable housing in a location where land values are so high, and the consequent recommendation that Section 106 agreement was a suitable solution to this planning need, and that you have based your recommendation on this advice. However, there are still issues in this application which contravene Camden planning policy, and we still wish to object.

I ask to speak at the planning meeting on March 16th, to object to this planning permission.

This is what I wish to say at the meeting, and I would request that this letter is put before the Planning Committee at the meeting so they can read it– since I will have the summarise our points to keep within our allotted speakers' timsespan.

" I represent members of Mount Pleasant Association, Calthorpe Street Residents' Association and Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum, some 200 local residents in all, in objecting to this application.

We have read the Council's planning officer's recommendation with great disappointment. It appears to accept Section 106 money in exchange for the provision of cramped flats to be let or sold on the open market, with the lame excuse that property in this area is so expensive that no truly affordable accommodation can be provided. We had thought Camden Council to be more robust in its planning policies concerning housing provision. We also found the tenor of the Inspector's comments concerning the "difficulties" of providing affordable housing in such an expensive area to be both surprising and disappointing.

We still wish to ask the Council to reject this rather second-rate proposal out of hand since it contradicts Camden’s own planning policies.

**We say that the proposal should not have increased roof height, not have an extended basement and should provide reasonably sized accommodation as decent living space, not miniature flats for extortionate prices.**

These proposals contravene Camden planning policies, as set out below.

1. 51 Calthorpe Street is within a Conservation Area. **The proposed mansard roof changes the height of the existing roof-line, which is against Council policy for Conservation Areas**.
2. This proposal includes digging out the basement to a greater depth; **this contravenes Camden Council's current draft planning policies concerning extended basements**.
3. The applicant has forwarded Building Assessment surveys which purport to show that deep excavation will not affect the existing historic structure of no 51, nor interfere with the listed terrace next door. Well, it would say that, wouldn't it; that was their surveyor's brief.

One of the inhabitants of the listed terrace has also taken professional advice, which states that there are errors in this Building Assessment report, and that damage will occur to no 51 and to the adjoining listed terrace.

It depends who you believe. Both are equally professional assessments.

We, as local organisations, believe that damage to the premises at no 51 and to the adjoining listed terrace will occur. Therefore, **the excavation of the basement should not be allowed, not only because it is against Camden planning policies, but because it will cause damage**.

1. The proposed new domestic flats, whether with or without frosted glass, will overlook neighbours in Pakenham Street and the play-group. The raised roof level will also overlook these neighbours. These local people **object to the impending lack of privacy**, and we support their objection.
2. The proposed mansard roof will raise the roofline by 2 metres, and although stepped down at the back of the premises, **will still affect the Right to Light of the neighbours mentioned in section 4 above.**
3. The proposed flats are not spacious. It is clear that they are mainly small, to maximise the sale or rental income. **Does Camden really support this kind of profit-driven development at the expense of decent – and affordable – housing provision?**

All in all we think this is a shabby attempt to drive through a second-rate development of a building of architectural merit, so that the developer can make money by rack-renting out cramped small flats for high rents. We were not aware that Camden Council should even wish to consider, let alone support, such a greedy and socially unjustified proposal.

We realise that the Inspector's comments opened the door for a Section 106 agreement, as the best of a bad bargain, but we maintain this is a wrong course of action. It is a "deal" of little merit and we ask Camden to act with some independence on the finer points and detail of this application.

We ask you **to reject this application in its present form and ask the developer to re-present this project in a more modest form** – ie less added height, less added depth and an offering of decent housing provision."

That is the bones of our objection, though obviously when I speak I will be summarising these points to keep within my allotted time-span.

I realise the Inspector gave you leeway to progress to a Section 106 agreement, but we still think this is a wrong route to take, and the Inspector's views should be acknowledged, but not necessarily followed to the letter.

Please would you acknowledge receipt of this letter?

Yours sincerely

Judy Dainton

Mount Pleasant Association (exec committee) Calthorpe Street Residents' Association (Secretary) Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum (Chair).