

Gentet, Matthias

From: Whittingham, Gideon
Sent: 30 June 2017 12:19
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Comments on 2017/2794/P have been received by the council.

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From: Ben Williams [mailto:]
Sent: 30 June 2017 11:12
To: Whittingham, Gideon <Gideon.Whittingham@camden.gov.uk>
Subject: Fwd: Comments on 2017/2794/P have been received by the council.

Gideon

I was reviewing the Camden website this morning and the below comments had not yet been published. Given the timescale for decision could you please ensure that this is done.

I couldn't also help but notice that the contractor here (Rydon) is the same as the one who completed the refurbishment of the Grenfell Tower and a number of others that have recently been reassessed and found to be non compliant with building regs. For the sake of future occupants of the refurbished Ashton Court can we please have a full review of the proposed specification of the works to ensure the cost focused approach Rydon have employed in the past to buy work is not repeated again in Camden.

Personally if I were Origin I wouldn't be employing Rydon now on any building project (especially a refurb of a 1960-70s higher rise building providing accommodation for vulnerable older people) as their track record is poor and it seems highly likely the forthcoming lawsuits (including from Camden Council) will bankrupt them - leading to huge cost and time overruns later when a new contractor has to be brought in to take over part way through.

Does Camden Council have any power to stop Rydon operating on similar properties to Chalcot/Grenfell/Ashton Court in the borough at least until clarity is ascertained as to who is responsible for these terrible events?

Ben

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: <planning@camden.gov.uk>

Date: 12 June 2017 at 19:06:15 BST

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Comments on 2017/2794/P have been received by the council.

As previously noted and summarised here for brevity, a body of work was produced by the Council Planning Officer to review the original planning application. To my knowledge this has not been updated as part of this s73 process. For the Mews redevelopment this work naturally focused on the more controversial aspects of the development including the basement, the height and the nature of the upper floors and their set back. All of that work needs now to be reconsidered from scratch as the design documents have been altered very substantially making the work done redundant. It is therefore impossible to make a full assessment of the planning impact of this new design without a full application being submitted and going through the appropriate consultations and review process with officers.

Taking each in term:

- (i) Basement – the updated design now includes a substantially larger basement excavation. The impact of this additional construction period and the additional risk to surrounding properties needs to be reconsidered by officers as part of their review under applicable policy on basement development. I should very much like to see calculations of the additional volume of earth to be removed from the basement of plots 4 and 5 and attendant increase in programme. Such increases would need to be considered by the officer in the course of a full planning application. The technical solutions for the increased volume shall also need to be submitted and verified according the published protocol.
- (ii) Increase of height – an approval of the additional height gain above the adjacent property (103 Camden Mews) would not be consistent with the established planning approval and other precedents, particularly for a conservation area where context is of greater importance than usual.

The majority of the objections received to the original application focused on the fact that the site seemed overbuilt. Many people stated that they believed that a reduction to 4 houses would be more appropriate given the plot size. This increase in height sought is illustrative of the fact that the original comments were accurate and the developer is in fact unable to deliver what they originally proposed within the consented envelope. The developer acknowledges this but chooses to describe it as correcting “discrepancies... between floor plans, elevations and sections”. I may be cynical but I would question whether these were in fact deliberate “discrepancies” in the original application to show the height matching the adjacent building when in fact it was never going to be possible to fit the desired number of floors within the approved height. I would suggest that a more equitable solution to the developers self-imposed “discrepancy” is that they either remove a floor to fit within the existing approved envelope or else explore other construction methodologies (such as post-tensioned slabs) to achieve their desired number of floors within the permitted height.

- (iii) Substantial increase in massing - the large increase sought in basement, 1st and second floor volumes are inconsistent with the remainder of the mews developments and take a site which many commenters felt was already overbuilt and make it substantially worse. Again it

is not possible to calculate the exact volume increases sought floor by floor but they appear substantial – particularly for plots 4 and 5 below ground.


(iv) Removal of step backs and terraces from upper levels – as previously noted the established architectural vernacular of the mews is for ground plus one additional storey with any permitted second floor development set back sufficiently far that it is not visible from street level. The original designs were already somewhat 'aggressive' in their application of the doctrine as they utilised only partial cut backs but at least they articulated the façade and prevented a monolithic appearance. The revised design is incoherent with the remainder of the mews as it has no set back at any level with even the dormer windows at second floor being almost full width and contained within an extremely highly angled roof that is almost vertical. The effect of this undifferentiated façade will be to dwarf the surrounding buildings and look substantially out of place, thus having an adverse effect on the conservation area.

(v) Impractical servicing arrangements – in the pursuit of maximising the possible envelope on the site the developer has omitted areas for refuse and bin storage from the external area and notionally allocated some internal space which is clearly impractical. This contrasts with the approach taken at 103 Camden Mews in their recent application. A decision to reject this s73 application in favour of returning to a design that is more practical and consistent with that originally submitted could reintroduce appropriate external cycle and bin storage cupboards with step backs at upper levels.

(vi) Overlooking/and overshadowing of neighbouring properties – as noted previously all work done by the officer in assessing the prior scheme is now redundant due to the fact that the cut backs have now been removed substantially increasing overlooking and loss of privacy and light on neighbours.

In conclusion we object to the proposed amendment sought as it is seeking to substantially increase the massing of a scheme that was already overbuilt in clear breach of established planning guidance, policy and precedent on the mews. The new design is disproportionate to the surrounding buildings, out of keeping with the context and therefore of clear detriment to the conservation area. Had this increased height and massing been submitted as part of the original application it would have been correctly rejected by planning officers and this 'strategy' of the developers to secure an unbuildable consent which is then substantially increased under a s73 in clear violation of the planning analysis and principles established as part of the original application must be rejected.

Comments made by Mr and Mrs Williams of 90 Camden Mews, London, NW1 9BX


Preferred Method of Contact is Email

Comment Type is Objection