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To: Planning
Subject: Planning Appeals and Enforcement Team - 2016/7088/P

Rochester Square Spiritualist Church:

This renowned purpose built Christian church might be the first of its kind. It is one of the very few Christian Spiritualist churches remaining in London. It was built in 1926 with donations during the time of the General Strike. One of the founding members had been evicted from their home due to their faith. Another founding member, from the Building Society who lent the money, died before the loan could be secured, leaving the founders in serious debt. They could only afford to buy one chair each. But this is the story of this church, that is now in an affluent area of the capital that wishes to overlook the religious heritage of Rochester Square.

The owners have, regrettably, over a long period of time, allowed it to become extremely run down in order to sell it. We, as Spiritualists, wish to challenge the planning application in order to save its sale and demolition.

Spiritualism is a bona fide religion in the UK with hundreds of churches, and many home groups. Spiritualists believe in the Afterlife and that the deceased can be contacted for support and comfort. There are TV channels with shows devoted to the art of contacting the deceased, there are books and magazines on this topic which has a market that is extremely large in the UK and throughout the world. Healing is also part of this religion and is very popular with those of all backgrounds, ages, races, etc.

Spiritualists are submitting a proposal to the owners, a large church owning charity, to retain the property as a church, to improve its exterior, making it attractive and welcoming and transforming it into an amenity for the people of Camden. The structure can be made good and the interior can be furnished to provide a place of quiet reflection, to meet others of like mind, and to receive messages and healing.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle KStJ, DL gave £500 of his own money to build this church. He is on record as saying that he "often expressed a wish that he should be remembered for his psychic work rather than for his novels". Many prominent celebrities and leading politicians were Spiritualists, including the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable The Earl of Balfour KG OM PC FRS DL