

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/7088/P	Judi Blackmur	18 Rochester Square London NW1 9SA	17/08/2017 21:48:16	OBJNOT	18 Rochester Square London NW1 9SA

Planning Department
London Borough of Camden

17 August 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application: 2016/7088/P
Spiritualist Temple, Rochester Square, London NW1

I have lived at 18 Rochester Square for 33 years, and I am writing to object to the proposed development of the Spiritualist Temple site.

- Groundwater Management: Potential Project Risk: Although my property does not back on to the site, I am gravely concerned that one of the reports states: It should be noted that the excavation of the basement may undermine the adjacent property and could lead to settlement in gardens and damage to buildings and below ground services. Further surveys are recommended by the report author, and one bullet point has been completely redacted (one of many redactions in the overall documentation package), leading the reader to conclude that at least one recommendation for mitigating measures have been removed.
- In the Geotechnical Survey and Advice documentation, pages 15 (para 1), 16 (para 2) and 17 (para 1) and 18 (first sentence and under Management of Formation Level) all have partial sentences redacted – this raises a concern that important facts are being withheld which could impact on this development, as both pertain to ground stability & retaining structures.
- Light pollution: Pic 13 of the Landscaping document shows a green roof with a large skylight, which will create light pollution for the surrounding properties.
- Selective/biased consultation: There has been no consultation with the local community – ie the residents of Rochester Square and Stratford Villas. The consultation by Bakul Patki and with Samina Zahir was limited to one specific cohort/viewpoint - that of the arts community, which in general has little or no personal connection with the area. To cite the endorsements from the Mayor of London's office and Somerset Studios is theoretical and

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irrelevant – these organisations have no association with the area, and their views have no point of reference on the impact of the project on the local community. More importantly, at no stage have local residents been consulted for our views, nor have we been informed of a number of critical issues concerning the introduction of a commercial/public operation namely:

- Security and monitoring of the Community Centre
 - Hours of operation – including the ‘rental’ of the community facilities for events, classes etc
 - Facility maintenance and management
 - Permitted and prohibited activities
 - Noise control
- Increased commercial density: The development of the Spiritualist Church site is likely to overlap with the development of 1 Rochester Square – the former ‘garden centre.’ Although no plans have yet been submitted for the latter project, it is clear that these two developments will bring a major change to this Conservation Area, and introduce considerable commercial enterprise to a family/residential environment, together with all the accompanying activity – deliveries, refuse management, increased traffic, light and noise pollution
- Traffic management: The documentation is inaccurate in describing the south side of Rochester Square as a quiet street with little traffic. The Council is aware that Stratford Villas and Rochester Square are a ‘rabbit run’ for traffic seeking to avoid the congestion of Camden Road, and the Council has held consultation regarding traffic calming/management options in the past. The corner of Stratford Villas and Rochester Square is virtually a blind spot, with space for only one car/truck to turn the corner at a time – to introduce commercial activity to this area will increase the flow of traffic and consequent potential for accidents. In addition, there is already a high demand for parking on both sides of Rochester Square – increased density of both accommodation and commercial activity will add further burden to the traffic flow on both sides of the Square.
- Construction services: The construction of the flats on Camden Road/St Pancras Way necessitated the blocking off of an entire traffic lane. Rochester Square is a narrow street, and I am concerned about the flow of heavy plant and equipment on the surrounding roads. This has not been addressed adequately in the planning documentation.
- Project design and aesthetics: While I appreciate that taste in design is highly personal and ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder,’ this building is a truly boring and uninspiring design. One wonders why every architect currently designing for Camden (eg St Pancras Way) thinks we all want to be surrounded by rusty metal...as if Camden is London’s ‘rust belt’ rather than an exciting, creative innovative Borough.

For all these reasons, I am strongly opposed to the proposed development and urge that the

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2016/7088/P	Candice TEMPLE	FLAT 5 REDCROFT 226 IVERSON ROAD NW6 2HL NW6 2HL	17/08/2017 16:34:30	OBJEMPER	<p>I am writing to object to the planning application to demolish Rochester Square Spiritualist Temple and build a block of flats on the following grounds.</p> <p>LOSS OF A VALUABLE ASSET TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. The Temple provided a service to the public since its inception in the 1920s. It has been deliberately run down by people who never paid a penny for it just to make a profit. People, including myself, attended for services and healing sessions for nearly a century. No more blocks of expensive flats are needed in the area, there are enough going up all over London.</p> <p>UNUSUAL BUILDING OF GREAT HISTORICAL INTEREST. This building was built in an interesting style and it adds character to the Rochester Square locality. Smashing it down and replacing it with flats and an unnecessary art gallery would do nothing for the community or the locality. This new building would be completely out of harmony in terms of building materials and design with the picturesque nature of Rochester Square.</p> <p>At least three mature trees, including what should have been a preserved lime tree, have been axed without the permission of the council. These trees provided an amenity for the public who could enjoy the garden of the temple, with its views and shade, both from inside the garden and the view from their homes. It would be impossible for the developers to successfully replicate what they have illegally torn down. The developers also axed rose bushes which were planted in special ceremonies on the ashes of deceased people.</p> <p>The surrounding buildings will be affected in terms of the light that will be blocked by the new building. The amenity of the previous charming views will be gone forever.</p> <p>These old buildings are built without suitable foundations for basement excavations. Such work would not only be inappropriate but also threaten the houses, trees and water table in Rochester Square.</p> <p>This is both a residential area and a conservation area. As such it would be out of keeping for the proposed gallery and art workshops. A high percentage of residents, who attended the public meeting about the proposed works, are artists and say that they have no need at all for such a facility, they are well provided for by other local assets.</p> <p>The Rochester Square Spiritualist Temple and goodness knows how many other such spiritualist temples, were created for the benefit and healing of people for the foreseeable future. The idea was, that as people died, with the passage of time, the deeds would be entrusted to those who would care for them and continue to let them thrive. Unfortunately the organisation that called itself the SNU, was entrusted with the deeds of these temples. The temples are deliberately run down and then sold by the SNU, regardless of their intended purpose making huge sums of money - and they never paid a sou for them in the first place! Many have met a similiar fate, including the Waterloo Spiritualist Church in Liverpool. I know this isn't a planning consideration, but I appeal to the planners to please find ways to reject this application and get these people stopped as many would say that what they are doing is criminal and evil. This is the "flagship" spiritual temple, as it was built with money donated by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He must be turning in his grave.</p>

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2016/7088/P	Anthony Blackmur	18 Rochester Square London NW1 9SA	17/08/2017 21:02:18	OBJ	<p>Having lived in Rochester Square since 1984 I have valued the peace and quietude provided by the residential nature of the immediate area, part of which has been due to the unused garden centre space in Rochester Square and the back garden of the Spiritual Temple as well as the road being converted to a cul de sac.</p> <p>Modern developments these days are all about profit, squeezing the last iota of return to the detriment of existing local residents. As guardians of our environment and heritage Camden Council must reject this application on the basis that it is an excessive over-development of the site replacing a fine example of esoteric architecture that is a unique and integral part of the streetscape and history of the area, to be replaced by yet another homogenised box made of the cheapest materials to maximise profit. Another example of our sky being 'stolen' by developers. The proposed development is totally out of keeping with the neighbouring houses and flats whose quality of life regarding light and views will be dramatically effected. It's proposed size and density takes no account of the loss of green 'space' provided by the back garden of the temple (which has already seen the removal of an established old tree - hopefully with planning permission - and shrubs).</p> <p>Parking too will become an issue with users of the commercial/workspace driving to work as well as those living in the proposed development no doubt having the need to park somewhere.</p>

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2016/7088/P	William Birtles, Patricia Hewitt	21 Rochester Square London NW1 9SA	17/08/2017 16:31:35	COMMNT	<p>We have lived at 21 Rochester Square for 32 years. We are writing to object to the proposed development on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over-development The proposed construction is a gross over-development of a narrow strip of land sandwiched between a terrace of late Georgian houses in Rochester Square and the block of flats fronting onto Camden Road. 2. Excessive density The proposed density - one floor of mixed commercial and workspace use and nine separate flats above - shows that the developers' primary intention is to squeeze as much profit from the site as possible. This scale and density of development is wholly out of keeping with the adjoining terrace of Georgian houses that match the houses on two other sides of the square and the modest scale of the buildings in Camden Mews. 3. Destruction of character of the neighbourhood Rochester Square and its immediate neighbourhood is overwhelmingly residential, a large proportion of the houses being occupied by families with children. Throughout the time we have lived there (and for several decades before that, according to our previous neighbours), there have only been two commercial premises in the immediate neighbourhood - the small vehicle repair shop, Lucky Motors, that has now closed, and a furniture restoration workshop, both in Camden Mews between Rochester Square and Camden Square. The scale of development now proposed for the Spiritualist Church site would introduce a significant and inappropriate degree of commercial activity into this historic neighbourhood. 4. Destruction of a unique historic building The Spiritualist Temple, although not listed, is a most unusual building that adds to the special character of Rochester Square and the Conservation Area of which it is part. Like many other residents, we believe the building should be retained. We would therefore have no objection to the building itself being modernised (within the existing external fabric) and used as a gallery or studio, since such a development would both retain the existing historic building and be of an appropriate scale. 5. Impact on traffic The construction of nine separate flats, with nine owners or tenants, each potentially owning at least one car or motor bike will inevitably lead to a significant deterioration in local traffic conditions and parking availability. As you are aware, parking in this area is tightly restricted and, in particular, parking has been prohibited in the narrow lane/access road fronting the terrace of houses adjacent to the proposed development. We know from personal experience over three decades that parking has become progressively more difficult and residents often struggle to re-park their cars after even a short absence. We would remind you of the decision last year by the Council as local planning authority to refuse permission for an entrance/exit to 1 Rochester Square (ie the central gardens) opposite 21 Rochester Square because it would have meant the loss of three existing parking spaces. For many decades, this side of Rochester Square has been closed at the Camden Road end, part of an effort to reduce through traffic and the risk it posed particularly to children. We very much welcome the recent decision to make this side of Rochester Square a Play Street one

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					<p>Sunday a month and would strongly support an extension of that scheme. Anything that brings extra traffic and cars into the neighbourhood would be damaging to the safety and wellbeing of the families living there.</p> <p>6. Loss of green space A striking feature of the Camden Conservation Area is the amount of green space, not only in Camden Square and, to a lesser extent, Rochester Square, but in the gardens between the houses. The terraced houses next to the Spiritualist Temple land look over Rochester Square to the front and over the roof and garden of the Temple to the back; similarly, many of the flats in Rochester Court benefit from the view over the Temple property and land. This massive development would destroy that amenity, further damage the special character of the neighbourhood and provide an unfortunate precedent for other future developments.</p> <p>For all these reasons, we strongly oppose the proposed development and urge that the application be referred to the Development Control Committee for full consideration. Please notify us of the date of any Committee meeting.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>WILLIAM BIRTLES</p> <p>RT HON PATRICIA HEWITT</p>
2016/7088/P	Miss H Davies	Kidderminster	17/08/2017 19:06:51	OBJ	<p>I strongly oppose the demolition and erection of a three-storey building in its place. This church has significant historic, cultural and social importance, and as such should not be destroyed.</p> <p>Such proposed plans would also negatively affect the surrounding properties by over -looking and causing noise disturbance.</p>

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2016/7088/P	Sally Hodgkinson	22 Rochester Square London	17/08/2017 23:10:29	COMMNT	<p>1. Erosion of character in a conservation area and overdevelopment of small site: Rochester Square and its immediate neighbourhood is overwhelmingly residential, a large proportion of the houses being occupied by families with children. The proposed construction disregards the protected status of the area and would introduce a significant and inappropriate degree of commercial activity into this historic neighbourhood on a gross scale.</p> <p>would be a misuse of over-development of a narrow strip of land sandwiched between a terrace of late Georgian houses in Rochester Square and the block of flats fronting onto Camden Road.</p> <p>2. Excessive density and blocked light: Having lived at 30 Rochester Square and backing onto the Spiritualist Temple from 2005-2010, it is indisputable that a building of the size and density proposed in the plans would feel grossly oversized and wholly out of keeping with the neighbourhood and block nearly all light to the backside of the terraced row of houses.</p> <p>3. Destruction of a unique historic building The Spiritualist Temple is an unusual and rare gem; the kind of characterful and historically interesting place that Camden should be preserving as so many of its most valuable landmarks and sites become homogenised by development. The residents and locals are in no way supportive of draining Camden of its unique identity.</p> <p>5. Impact on local traffic and resident parking</p>
2016/7088/P	Katherine Mendelsohn	53 Hyndland Road Glasgow G12 9UX	17/08/2017 13:14:15	COMNOT	<p>To whom it may concern, from 1973-1986 (my father's death) my family home was at 35 Rochester Square, NW1. This is relevant as it backs directly onto the Spiritualist Temple currently threatened with demolition. A historic Arts & Crafts church, which was dedicated in 1920 by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it feels of tantamount historic importance that this rare landmark not be demolished. Furthermore, it provides a place of sanctuary and refuge very necessary to the area in turbulent times. Not something the proposed flats would provide for the wider community. As a pupil of the nearby Camden School for Girls (1982-89) we were proud of the building's history and learnt about the few remaining landmarks such as this. Though I now live in Scotland, I still have a home in Brecknock Road N19, and most strongly object to this application.</p>

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2016/7088/P	Fraser Lancaster	116 Camden Road NW1 9EE	17/08/2017 23:06:04	OBJEMPER	<p>I am writing to strongly object to this abhorrent proposal.</p> <p>The fact is that the Rochester Square Spiritualist Temple is as intrinsic to this lovely conservation area as eggs are eggs. Take it out and the Square loses its character, depth and warmth. The attractive garden of the Temple, views of which have been the privilege of many of the houses it backs onto, is an amenity which must be restored to its former glory – before its trees and rosebushes were butchered by those who are solely motivated by greed.</p> <p>The horrible modern building which has been proposed, with its white elephant of an arts facility, will trash this historic square and cause misery to those who love and inhabit it. Basement developments are totally inappropriate for this area and should not be permitted.</p> <p>I could go on, but I won't. Planners must find a way to stop the demolition of this remarkable Temple, a memorial to Arthur Conan Doyle, with its valuable artefacts and gorgeous stained glass windows. The Temple was built with love for the benefit of the people, not for the profit of Mammon.</p> <p>Fraser Lancaster 116 Camden Road NW1 9EE</p>
