

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 31 October 2017 09:35
To: Davies, Fiona
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: letter of support for planned basement change of use at Da Vinci House, 44 Saffron Hill

Dear Fiona

Re: proposed change of use of basement at Da Vinci House, 44 Saffron Hill, London EC1N 8FH

I live in flat 22 on the 5th floor, there are 5 of us in the family who reside here permanently as primary residence (Mum and dad and 3 children). I have lived here for 20 years, our family for >10 years, and we love the immediate area, and Camden as a whole, and we use as much of the amenities the council offers (eg, libraries). We have no plans to ever move.

I write in support of the planned change of use in our basement which is currently sitting with you for consideration, and speak for the whole family on this (myself and Rachel Ashton whom you can see is also on your council tax register as resident and I have copied in).

1) SECURITY – we have potential to make the building safe again, it is currently VERY unsafe

I own a couple of storage units in the basement, and they have been broken into numerous times in the past year. This is also the case for a number of other residents (using storage space which has been burgled at same time). The problem is that the basement is an opaque place at the best of times, even when well lit, because there is little through traffic – at the moment it is a car/storage space. Police have been called on each occasion and crimes registered, but there have not been any arrests (as far as I know), or properties recovered. It has sent a chill through the block as you can imagine, after the first burglary was so swiftly followed by the second (a few weeks later), making everyone realise the block has a 'blind spot' (the basement) which naturally attracts badness since is easy to hide and there is little prospect of people coming to discover you. We have installed CCTV but invasions have persisted. For everyone with a family, this has been especially worrying and such it remains. Changing the use and getting an office in the basement will materially change the block to make it ultra safe once more. No place to hide, and more through traffic of normal workers which will deter anyone thinking they can burgle unseen. Also the ramp is planned to disappear in the proposal, which can be seen from outside at the moment and I am sure offers an incentive to burglars thinking 'if I can get in and down the ramp, that's it, since no-one will see me downstairs'.

2) USE OF SPACE – improvement

At the moment the basement is dingy and used for a few storage units and storage of cars and motorbikes. It is unappealing, even leaving aside the safety aspects. The plans will regenerate the space into something of use, and as such we should applaud any measures to make good use of unused inner London space. The basement is a clutter box of unused paint and debris at the moment, all of which will go.

3) Limiting car space usage by Camden – a set aim

At the moment the basement has ongoing permission for (I think) 17 car spaces. I know that Camden is trying, as are most city councils around the world understandably from a pollution perspective, to limit car use. The cycle super highway is about (November) to be extended past us and up to Kings Cross. This proposal would remove, in one swoop, many car spaces from the Camden register, right on the new cycle route as well which must count for an extra desired gain, so fits with your long standing environmental aims very well.

4) Office not nightclub is good fit for block and area

Having lived in DVH for 20 years, I have seen proposals come and all go, for the basement, variously for restaurants, nightclubs etc, (including for the empty space beside DVH as well), none of which can

ever fit well with a block which is surely a model for urban living, 23 flats of all ranges, from singles to families, and also from young people but also including retirees who want to live in the city. I am concerned that we need to morally get some use of the space and not just let it lie fallow, but it only really suits an office, which is bustling during the day and less so during the evening and weekends when the block is more at peace. In my 20 years I have watched Clerkenwell blossom as jobs move into the area, in no small way thanks to yourselves encouraging brown site development, and this has created a wonderful atmosphere in the area now. This is a big win for the council in my opinion, and we should all continue to encourage this.

5) I have not heard any dissenting voices

Everyone can speak for themselves, but I suspect if no one has an issue that you will not receive many emails/letters! I will say that most of the people I have spoken to about this in the block are not so fussed about any of the issues, but they do think one thing: getting the basement turned into something of use (that is compatible with block living above it) is an absolute priority because it makes everyone safer.

Please do contact me if you want to get in touch about anything I have said, or that I can help clarify as a resident etc.

Good luck with your determinations....

Warm regards

Andrew Roberts



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