

## Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Spiritualist Temple  
Rochester Square  
London  
NW1 9RY

**Date:** 25 January 2018

**Planning application Reference:** 2017/7020/P

**Proposal:** Retention of building with exception to demolition of single storey rear wing; refurbishment for continued community use (Class D1). Erection of two storey rear extension, plus basement, comprising 5 self-contained flats (Use Class C3) comprising 1 x studio and 4 x 2 bed, with associated cycle parking and landscaping including 4no. trees.

**Summary:** We **object** to the current proposal. With continued issues around overshadowing, flooding, use, layout and possibly ownership, the proposed development neither preserves nor enhances the conservation area and should be rejected

### Comments:

1. Although the current proposal represents a marginal improvement on the earlier plans (2016/7088/P), some of the concerns outlined in our submission of 26 September 2017 remain notably around ownership, bulk, overshadowing, flooding and use.
2. The one major concession in the new proposal is the retention of the existing main building on the south site with only the rear single storey rear wing being demolished to make way for a new build to the north.
  - 2.1. The new build represents a significant increase in bulk, though the proposed scale represents a smaller infill compared to the neighbouring buildings.
  - 2.2. Section DD and elevations BB & DD – illustrate the awkward junction between the proposed new building with the existing temple building – where a chamfered profile to the roof is necessary to avoid colliding with the existing windows of the chapel. A gap at this level to express

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the junction between existing and new might be a more sympathetic way to approach this.

- 2.3. Although an impact assessment report on the construction of the basement has been submitted as part of the application, the reservations contained in our original submission based on the experience of extensive flooding in Julian Court remain
3. The development of the rear extension to house the accommodation units, despite the claims made in the BVP report, still causes problems with both overshadowing and privacy. It is noted that BVP did not visit any of the neighbouring properties affected by the new construction and that their conclusions do not state unequivocally that there will be no negative impact due to overshadowing, but rather that if built the levels of overshadowing would meet BRE criteria. That is not quite the same thing.
4. It should also be noted that the construction of the rear extension accommodation unit will lead to a loss of open garden space which is in breach of both the Camden Square Conservation Area Management Strategy – para 7.4 - and national planning guidance as expressed in para 74 of National Planning Policy Framework.
5. Retention of the existing building is welcomed. However, its intended use is unclear. A proper function should be identified, even if this were to mean a use-class change to (for instance) small scale office/workshop/workspace. In the drawings the building is shown as being refurbished, with a mezzanine installed as well as kitchen and WC facilities and is just described as “Community Use”. Its use needs to be defined from the outset to ensure that
  - 5.1. The activities will not generate unacceptable levels of noise
  - 5.2. The space is managed properly, is utilised as intended and does not become a redundant space, left empty for a time and then subject to further conversion.
  - 5.3. Its financial base is clear, viable and sustainable
  - 5.4. It offers something different to a number of existing community facilities and spaces in the immediate area including Maiden Lane; Camden Square, St Pauls Church, the Irish Centre and Rochester Square and demonstrates a clear need
6. We have serious concerns about the layout of the proposed residential units. Although the plans state that these units comply with London housing space standards, the units could prove difficult to function adequately.
  - 6.1. The combined kitchen/dining/living areas in Units 1, 2 & 3 represent awkward spaces compromised by the stair enclosure and void spaces

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- 6.2. Unit 2 in particular shows the living area located in what is really the through-route between entrance and staircase.
- 6.3. Unit 3 basement level single bedroom (in particular) is an awkward space with no practical place to put the bed apart from how it is indicated in the drawing ie in the middle of the space.
- 6.4. The means of escape in units 2 & 3 from the basement via the staircase to the outside, involves passing through the kitchen area, which could cause concern to Building Control.
7. Furthermore, the scheme is described as "fully accessible" within the Design Access Statement. This cannot be the case, however, as the ground floor spaces constitute the living areas for split level living with bedrooms at basement level. There is no space for a bedroom at this level to meet the Lifetime Homes criteria.
8. The proposed development continues to be bedevilled by problems around ownership, bulk, overshadowing, flooding and use. The residential units offer awkward living spaces with little amenity; may not satisfy Building Regulations and negatively impact on neighbouring buildings in terms of overshadowing and potentially noise. Moreover, the scheme has the general appearance of trying to shoe-horn too much accommodation into what is now a reduced footprint compared to the previously submitted scheme. The proposal neither preserves nor enhance the Conservation Area and should be rejected.



**Signed:**  
David Blagbrough  
Chair  
Camden Square CAAC

**Date:** 27 January 2018