



10A SOUTH GROVE
HIGHGATE
LONDON
N6 6BS

David Peres Da Costa,
Planning Solutions Team
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle St
London WC1H 8EQ

28th April 2018
By email only

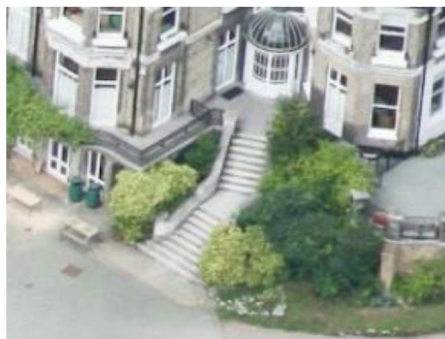
Dear Mr Peres Da Costa,

RE: Planning Application Reference 2017/7080/P – Channing Junior School, London N6 5JR

On behalf of the Highgate Society, I would like to re-iterate our objection to the above application and respond (in red) to the applicants second response as follows:-

Response to The Highgate Society's Comments dated 19th April, 2018

1. The Figure 1 diagram shown in the HS response is from an old survey. **The visual impact assessment is based on this incorrect set of drawings. If the VIA is to be relied upon then it should be revised to take account of the new survey.** The discrepancy was found during the design stage and a new survey commissioned. The correct stair is as shown in Figure 2 of their letter. This was as submitted for planning following the pre-application. There was never a question of the staircase being moved or rebuilt, as it is part of the original entrance from the gardens. **HS never suggested the stair should be moved or rebuilt, quite the opposite in fact.** The proposed building does not change the relationship from the existing section of cloister. **The proposed design shows the existing cloister being demolished and a new cloister being built 600mm further out which then collides with the side of the staircase in a very awkward manner.** This was pointed out during my site visit and I was given the impression that the school intended to keep the existing cloister which could be used and would be welcomed. A site visit is necessary to see the current cloister and to understand the effect that widening it would have on the staircase. If the existing cloister is retained then a wider ramped escape route could be provided on the other side of the stair.



2. The School notes the views of the Society, but recognises this is a matter of opinion and as previously stated, we believe that the extension remains in proportion to the rest of the building. I cannot think of any successful precedent that would support the schools view that such a large projection is in proportion with the rest of the building. Fairseat House or what remains of it should not appear propped on top of such a large plinth. Any reduction that is possible without losing essential space from within the hall should be seriously considered and not ignored. Were the school to seek to implement the suggestions made then it would result in

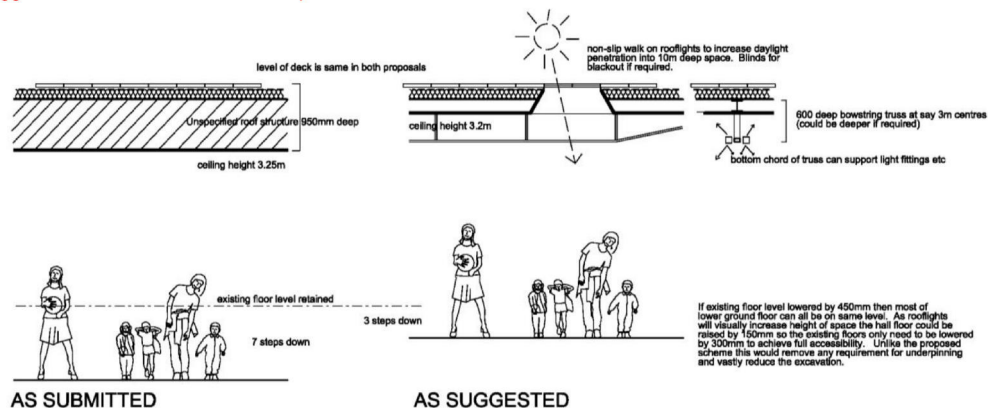
- A significant reduction in the circulation space reducing this to an unacceptable level for its multi-use levels. The only reduction in circulation space is the removal of a very wide flight of 7 steps which in themselves pose a hazard to young children, particularly when it is crowded. The circulation space outside the new hall in our suggestion is actually widened to create a decent size lobby, all on the same level. Further the typical use of the building in the daytime will typically result in very high volume use at specific times of the day such as assemblies. The design as submitted considered this by allowing for appropriate circulation space.

- Reductions in the planned roof space which is intended as a play area. The suggested reduction in the size of the roof results in a corresponding increase in play area where it currently is, on the ground.

- The kitchen being reduced to an unacceptable size such that it would not be able to cater for pupils and staff. The kitchen size is actually 3sqm larger and all of the existing kitchen equipment is shown on the proposed layout.

3. The School has considered the alternative scheme as submitted by the Highgate Society and reviewed the structural and visual impact of such changes. Please see attached the diagrams that we have produced (Figures 1, 2 and 3) and the notes below.

The deep roof structure is the minimum to allow play area use over. To raise the hall by the proposed 750mm, would have the effect of pushing the roof finish 750mm higher. This is simply not true. If the roof structure is left exposed internally, as suggested, then the ceiling can be raised so that it is level with the top chord of the exposed trusses. The roof deck could be left at exactly the same level so there would be none of the problems they have described. The section below (and attached for clarity) shows the possible roof structure and the raised floor level which then allows for much greater accessibility. This would have a detrimental effect on the existing buildings bay window and adjoining french doors, and a step would be needed to get back down to the current ground floor level (see attached side elevation- Fig. 1). The increased height shown in both figures 1 and 2 is not what we suggested and is not even a consequence of it as this section shows.



As part of the ongoing internal design development, the Phase 2 (undercroft side extension) has already been adjusted to allow for the 300mm drop to be accessible by ramp (sketch attached- Fig. 3), meaning the hall and undercroft level will lead to level changes in 2 areas internally: These internal

changes should not be necessary. If the scheme has been submitted for planning consent then it should have been thought through. If floor levels and depths of basements are being altered then that affects the BIA studies and should affect windows and doors on elevation. If the access statement says there is a lift then where is it on the plans? It is clear that this scheme needs amendments to the plans before it can be properly considered.

- The existing basement studios (2N^o) will be 300 higher than hall. Needing 2 steps.
- The exiting double door entrance under the cloister is at present level with the existing corridor.

There is also an issue with bringing the building out of the ground by 750mm and the possible introduction of a large lantern light. This would have a far greater impact than the proposed scheme which has already been the subject of a visual impact assessment. It is further considered that as well as having an adverse impact, the light lantern would impact materially on the school's plans for a raised play area, i.e. reducing the amount of play space for the pupils and also an increased health and safety issue. I made it clear in my meeting that this could be a series of smaller lanterns or even non-slip walk on rooflights which would not affect the play area at all.

The lift is not missing, disabled access has been at the forefront on internal design development. If the lift is not missing then why is it not visible on the plans? If disabled access has been at the forefront of internal design then why is there no lift and why is the lower ground floor shown with four different floor levels, two of them new. Existing and proposed levels indicate that ramps complying to building control, are not practical and not recommended (as at the tennis court level) with levels changes over 2m. So the existing arrangement, if that is what it can be described as, of allowing disabled access down the existing ramped roadway from the reception to the lower ground floor level is neither practical nor recommended. Surely a compelling argument for a disabled lift.

It is also worthy of note that there is currently no internal means of disabled access from the ground floor to the basement floor of the existing building and this does not form part of the scheme. With such a major refurbishment being proposed and when it includes an extension which will house the main assembly hall and dining hall, then disabled access is imperative. Disabled access is currently provided from the roadway across the playground into the two existing classrooms. As stated above the existing roadway is a non-compliant disabled ramp (too long, too steep, no level landings at intervals) and should not be used. Once complete this access will still be achieved using the lifts referred to above which will give full access to the hall. Disabled access will also be possible to all other existing and planned areas for development in the basement. I thought two of the existing classrooms were 300mm above hall level? There is an existing natural ramp which takes you from the play area to the side of the tennis courts and this will remain. An internal lift would then provide access to the hall at one of two locations currently being considered. This is part of the design development for the project and will be discussed with our Building Control advisors as the plans develop. It is not acceptable to state that it will hopefully be sorted out in future. The idea of a design and access statement as part of the planning process is because all too often schemes were granted consent which could then not be made accessible. This is just such a case. One of the plans I was shown at my meeting showed an external platform lift near to the kitchens. This would involve still using the unacceptable roadway ramp. Can you also imagine how the disabled person gets from the dining hall to the disabled toilet using an external platform lift, when the toilet is only a few feet away but up a flight of 7 steps?

4. The planned internal ramp was intended to be developed during the 'design development' phase and is part of the current internal design. Adjustments have been made to the door and wall positions to allow a ramp. The floor level difference is in fact 300mm allowing a 5m ramp. This complies with building regulations part M.

The School, as one would expect, takes its commitment to improving access very seriously and has recently agreed a further 3 year plan of improvements across the school. Further to this the school is also fully aware of its legal obligations to ensure that the proposal meets building regulation requirements. The school has an excellent record of making such improvements and the suggestion that the school does not take such considerations seriously is misinformed. Perhaps these worthy intentions could be backed up with a set of plans and access statement that actually show that this major refurbishment will indeed be accessible.

7. The fall from the playground to the tennis court is over the permitted limit for ramps and we do not currently intend providing ramped access. **Not sure we asked for one.** There are currently three proposed means of access to the lower area:

- External stairs (replacing the existing)
- Internal stairs into the pavilion
- Internal Disabled lift. **Why shown here but not to the main assembly/dining hall?**

It is considered that the measures as proposed materially enhance the current means of access in particular the provision of a disabled lift. The school anticipates that a condition of planning would be to provide a landscape plan for the site and this would address how the stairs are laid out. It could also consider other issues previously raised including the provision of seating in the bank. Though, it must be made clear that the school considers that seating on the bank is not material to the principle of this scheme.

9. The moving of the gate is not considered to be a planning matter. Having said that, the School plans to hang the gate outward and may as part of the ongoing design development move it to a new position.

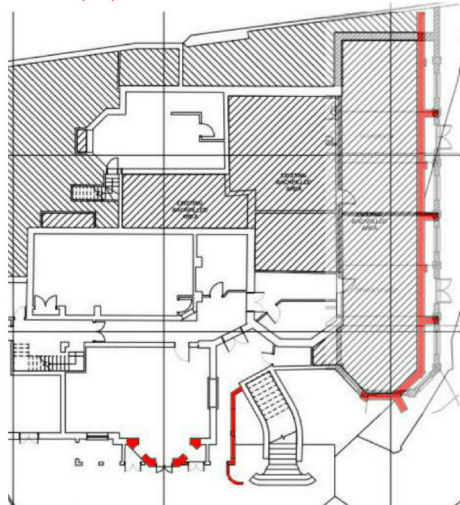
10. As noted above, we would consider this as part of a future landscaping plan for the site.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the design as submitted for planning meet in full the brief given by the school and that the plans are consistent with the advice and guidance provided by the Local Authority planning department at pre-application stage.

In considering the design, the school has sought at all times to ensure that the plans have:

- Minimal disruption to the existing classrooms on upper levels
- A minimal impact on the existing building. **New cloister collides with existing garden stair.**
- A clear span multi use space to accommodate the school's needs for assemblies, meetings, PE and catering
- Due consideration of the existing architectural style. **The plinth is out of proportion and to be that long is unnecessary.**
- Retention of existing architectural features. **The cloister is being demolished as is the retaining wall supporting the terrace to the SE of Fairseat. I do not believe this was made clear in the heritage report and it requires careful consideration. The plan below shows the location of the existing wall and the proposed wall. The elements to be demolished are shown in red.**



- Provision of a play area at roof level with access from ground floor classrooms which replaces the play area lost to the extension
- Improved access to the tennis/netball courts with dedicated changing facilities to allow for greater use by the school and the local community

None of our suggestions interfere with any of these objectives. We should add a further objective:-

- To make the school accessible to all.

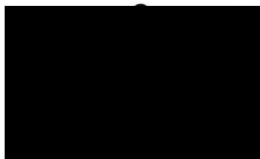
The School also considers that the comments made by the Society regarding a lack of consideration of accessibility issues do not properly reflect both the School's commitment to improving accessibility and do not recognise that there will of course be ongoing design development. Once the application is hopefully approved the School will ensure that the scheme is compliant with all existing regulations.

As previously stated the application should not be approved until accessibility is demonstrated, both on the drawings and in the access statement. The School would expect that the need to ensure compliance with building regulations as a condition of any approval. Compliance with Building Regulations is not a planning condition, accessibility is.

The current scheme is fundamentally flawed in three respects, all of which can be resolved quite easily:-

1. The lower ground floor should be designed with accessibility high on the list of priorities. Four different floor levels in the lower ground floor are not a good starting point. The attached plan shows how the floor levels could be altered to get one level over the vast majority of the floor plate.
2. The lower ground floor projection is out of proportion with the height of the building and could be reduced by pushing the new hall back into the building.
3. Unnecessary demolition of the existing cloister and rebuilding it 600mm out so that it collides awkwardly with the existing garden staircase.

Yours sincerely,



David Richmond

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on behalf of the Highgate Society Planning Group

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