

09 July 2018

Ms Rachel Stopard  
Director of Culture and Environment  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London, WC1H 9JE

Dear Madam

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A TWO STOREY EXTENSION AND A REAR  
EXTENSION TO 2-6 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON, NW1 0JH  
PLANNING AND CONSERVATION STATEMENT**

I write in support of the planning application which is being submitted by way of the Planning Portal with regard to the above proposals.

This is a case where pre-application advice was taken and provided by Thomas Sild on 12 February 2018. What Mr Sild had before him were preliminary sketches to give a general indication of what was being suggested at that time. Essentially he was content that the building should be extended to the rear and that a set back extension at fourth floor (roof) level would be likely to be acceptable. However he was not convinced that a limited fifth floor extension could be designed in such a way that views of the dome of the listed Koko Building would not be impaired. Consequently he thought that the proposals then before him could lessen the prominence of the theatre as a landmark building. However he went on to say that any proposal at roof level “must really demonstrate that it is not lessening the prominence and setting of the theatre through its scale, siting and materials”.

The Architects have revised the scheme to meet Mr Sild’s concerns by setting back the rooftop extension from the existing façade line and reducing the scale of the rear addition. Their revised scheme provides a suitable “top” to the building and sits harmoniously with the other curved roof forms adjacent to it.

I have worked with the Architects in the development of the current scheme and they have produced a comprehensive Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application. It includes a section headed “Planning” which I drafted and which briefly sets out the planning case for the proposals. It is not necessary, therefore, for me to repeat here what is said in it.

It will be seen from the D&A Statement that from all the important points from which the Koko building is viewed the proposed set back upper floors are scarcely, if at all, capable of being seen. These view points are those identified by your Council as being important and have not been selected by the Applicants to give a false impression.

The Koko building is very prominent, situated, as it is, on the corner of Camden High Street and Crowndale Road. It will, in fact, become more prominent when the original cupola is restored and the building repainted in brilliant white as now permitted. Realistically it would take a great deal of clearly unsympathetic development on the application site, constructed or painted in bright colours, for it to even begin to compete with the Koko building in terms of prominence. It is understandable that the immediate view might be taken that additional height on the building at 2-6 Camden High Street would inevitably impact on the Koko Building but what the Architects have demonstrated it that such a view simply does not stand up to detailed scrutiny. I would urge your Officers to test this in a measured and pragmatic way before making their recommendations.

Mr Sild did not feel that the appeal decision permitting a fifth floor at 8-12 Camden High Street in 2003 is comparable. However it related to a building only a short distance from the Koko building and the proposals undoubtedly obscured some views of it. It also related to a building with the same building line onto Camden High Street but where the new floor had a limited set back. The proposed new floors at 2-6 are set back further and the overall height of the building will remain considerably lower than the extended 8-12 Camden High Street. I gave evidence at the 2003 Inquiry and I recorded at the time that the issue of the Koko building was given very careful consideration. Nonetheless the Inspector concluded that she did "not consider that it (the new 5<sup>th</sup> floor) would block views of the copper dome to any significant effect". There was an acceptance therefore that some views would be, at least partially, blocked.

In terms of design it is important to recognise that it is by the same Architects as in the 8-12 case and follows very similar principles. What the inspector said in this regard was:

"I note, first, the proposed barrel vaulted roof would emulate the recent rooftop extensions to the Crowndale Centre to the south and Park View House on Miller Street to the north-west. Therefore its appearance would not be alien to other buildings within the Conservation Area that are visible from the appeal site... As such, the proposal would form part of the overall roofscape in this part of the Conservation Area ..... it would give the present building a more finished appearance ...." (paragraph 9).

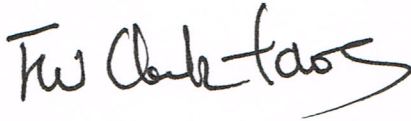
There would be merit in your Officers re-reading the full decision letter (Pins Ref: APP/X5210/A/02/1100386) since it contains so many analogies which apply equally to the present proposals concerning 2-6 Camden High Street.

I also think that the radical 5 storey development which has been permitted at 48-56 Bayham Place must be of some relevance. It is difficult to reconcile this permission with the stated objective, contained in Mr Sild's advice, of retaining smaller scale rear mews whilst retaining the hierarchy of the principal buildings along the High Street. Nonetheless it does accord with the stated objective in the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal of retaining the distinctive and varied character of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposals in this case will also contribute towards this.

Mr Sild also raised the issues of Amenity and Transport and it will be seen that they have been fully addressed in the supporting documentation.

Finally, and importantly, the pressing need to provide new office space should not be underestimated. The loss of office space brought about by the 2015 Permitted Development (England) Order has resulted in the demand for Office space not being met and existing occupiers being placed under great economic pressure as office rents have risen as a direct result of it. I have pointed out in the D&A Statement that there has been economic decline in the southern end of the High Street and the current application is an opportunity to redress this trend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JW Clark-Lowes', with a long, sweeping underline.

**Jeremy W Clark-Lowes MA Hons (Cantab) FRICS**

**Principal: JCL Planning**