October 14 2018

Charles Thuaire

Planning Officer

Camden Council

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**Planning Application 2018/4099/P Hampstead Parish Church NW3 6UU**

I am writing on behalf of the Parochial Church Council which has made the application for the installation of solar panels on the south facing roof of St John-at-Hampstead (Hampstead Parish Church).

There has been worship in this site for over 1000 years. The current building was first dedicated in 1747; considerably enlarged and the altar moved from the East end to the West End in the nineteenth century and further enlarged at the beginning of the twentieth century. Compared to the long history of the building the current proposals are minor alterations.

The Parochial Church Council set itself to respond to the challenge set by the Bishop of London for Churches to reduce their carbon footprint. If all 400 churches worked together there would be an impact across the metropolis. Our efforts have so far included: replacing oil heating with gas heating; replacing existing lightbulbs with low energy fittings; and making stained glass windows secure and draught proof. The next project is to install solar panels. We also believe that by exporting electricity we can make a contribution to reducing the community’s carbon footprint as we are conscious that it will be difficult for local Georgian houses to diversify their sources of electricity.

We are aware of the heritage of the building and have taken careful advice from our inspecting architect, who is vastly experienced in conservation architecture. He advised us how to position the panels so as to minimise the impact on the surroundings and the fabric of the building. As an expert on listed buildings we have followed his advice, and the architect who has made the planning application on our behalf has worked closely with him.

Before submitting the application, our advisers have checked that the roof is strong enough to take the weight of the panels. We have also taken note that the slates on the south roof, where the panels will be sited, were installed in the past 100 years. It is the slates on the north facing roof which are original to the building, and they will be unaffected by this proposal.

The proposal has been carefully designed with regard to its visual impact. It is almost impossible to see the proposed position of the panels from anywhere in the churchyard because of the trees and the way that the ground falls away. The panels will be hidden behind the parapet. The impact on the visual appearance of the church will be minimal.

The Parochial Church Council worships in a building which has evolved over the centuries, and wishes to respond to the challenges of today in a way which will contribute to a wider good, and does so in a way which preserves the visual aspect of this much loved community, heritage and spiritual asset. We trust that we will obtain your support.

Yours sincerely