

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2019/0004/P	Michael Leeson	09/03/2019 11:12:27	COMMNT	<p>The residents of the flats at 4-10 Tower Street have had no communication of any sort from Camden re this application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given that the opened up terrace will overlook the flats opposite please can it's use be restricted to office hours plus a bit to finish early evening. 2. The air conditioning units on top of the planned first floor addition (to house a café). <p>P6 of the acoustic report refers to the use of "low noise mode during night time" but surely an office block, even with a café, does not need 24 hour air conditioning. They should be switched off after 19.00 say. In fact on P8 there is reference to the other air con units (Installation 2) being assumed not to operate during night time. "The units would be serving an office building so it is unlikely that they would be operating further than 19.00pm and not before 07.00am."</p>
2019/0004/P	Kathleen Murray	08/03/2019 16:11:06	OBJ	<p>I object to this planning application on the following grounds:</p> <p>The proposed pedestrian and cycle gates would ruin the visual amenity of Tower Court, breaking up the long wall and damaging trees. We would lose a unique quiet and shady environment in an otherwise busy urban area. The character of Tower Court with its listed buildings from the late 1700s would be destroyed. Additionally the proposed pedestrian gate would increase footfall and be noisy, potentially at anti-social hours. Another concern is the rubbish/recycling. How will it be stored? We overlook the proposed bin area and are concerned about the smell, sight and sound of storage. Furthermore there is no information as to how the rubbish/recycling would be disposed. The implication of the gate is that the rubbish would be dragged onto or through Tower Court, both of which could create noise, smell and an unattractive scene. I propose that the rubbish and recycling be stored in the southeast corner of the site, in a gated area on Tower Street so that it is out of our sight and hearing and easily accessible for pick up. Using this area for this purpose would require giving up one parking place but it would also increase the number of bicycle parking spaces available, thus negating the need for a cycle gate from Tower Court. Allowing cyclists on Tower Court would endanger the safety of pedestrians. Another reason for my objection is the incomplete information. As mentioned earlier, the plan for rubbish disposal is absent as are any conditions on the use of the courtyard. Who will use the courtyard and when? The potential for antisocial usage in this residential area is great. Furthermore, why is the electrical substation opposite numbers 5 and 6 Tower Court highlighted on plans, indicating that it will be part of a separate application? Should we not have full information now on this integral part of the site? Please address these concerns</p>
2019/0004/P	Thomas Brezina	07/03/2019 11:54:41	OBJ	<p>My concern is regarding the planned Cafe and the air-condition units as source of noise.</p>

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2019/0004/P	Kenton Price	09/03/2019 23:26:23	OBJEMAIL	<p>The bedrooms of my apartment overlook Tower Court and the gardens.</p> <p>I object to any A3 use in the building, it is unnecessary in this conservation area. A1 is sufficient for coffeeshop-style cafe.</p> <p>To avoid loss of residential amenity, please do not allow the Tower Court gateway nor the Tower Street terrace to be operational before 8am or after 8pm. Please also ensure there is no smoking in Tower Court, as this was extremely unpleasant to residents when it was previously permitted by retailers in our building.</p> <p>Cyclists should also not ride in Tower Court but must dismount.</p>

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2019/0004/P	Elizabeth Bax, Covent Garden Community Association	10/03/2019 23:47:18	COMNOT	<p>Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) has a number of comments to make on this application. They include objections to some elements, support of some elements, and contributions to what we hope will be constructive dialogue with the applicant on others.</p> <p>Our comments fall into three categories, relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Mitigating the risk of damage to neighbouring residential amenity. B. Avoiding any changes of use, which we believe unnecessary for this applicant's purposes. C. Improving the design to maximise the opportunities presented by this unique site within the conservation area. <p>-----</p> <p>This application is for the redevelopment of the old school building at 22 Tower Street as the head office, events space & public cafe for the British Retail Consortium. We understand that the two upper floors will be sublet as offices to other occupants.</p> <p>We should say at the outset that we support the principle of upgrading this building for use as class A offices, and giving its garden a new lease of life.</p> <p>A. Mitigating the risk of damage to neighbouring residential amenity:</p> <p>The building is surrounded on all four sides almost entirely by residential buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbours all along the southern part of Tower Court are small family houses from ground to third floor level. - Buildings along the western part of Tower Court are the flats of Fielding Court from first floor level upwards. - A number of the buildings along Earlham Street are flats and maisonettes from first floor level upwards. - The main building opposite on Tower Street is the flats of 4-10 Tower Street from first floor level upwards. <p>Many of these buildings look out at the back to 22 Tower Street, and rely on this aspect for peaceful enjoyment in an area where the frontages are all on busy streets. The site is therefore highly sensitive.</p> <p>We seek modifications to the application and conditions to any consent, to prevent potential negative impact, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hours of use for the opened-up terrace on Tower Street that is opposite flats should be between 8.30am and 8pm at most. 2. Hours of use of the garden, except for access, should likewise be between 8.30am and 8pm. 3. Hours of use of the internal parts of the building be restricted to 8am to 10pm except for ordinary office use. 4. The proposed second gateway on Tower Court for entry to the events space / meeting room should not be

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included. The pathways could be reconfigured to use the existing gateway.

5. No gateways should be used at night between 8pm and 8am in the narrow, echoey spaces of Tower Court; access at these times should be via the Tower Street frontage.
6. Refuse bin access would be better relocated on Tower Street, but in any case should not be serviced after 8pm. If access needs to be from Tower Court, after all, then servicing should also not be before 8am.
7. Greenery should not be reduced for rear bike shed access; it should be retained or replaced with similar. The bamboo screen along Tower Street should be removed to allow views of greenery.
8. More trees should be planted for reasons of aesthetics, clean air and sound absorption.
9. No smoking should be permitted by staff or guests in Tower Court, where fumes get trapped and smoke can enter residential windows.
10. Cyclists should dismount before entering Tower Court.

B. Avoiding any changes of use, which we believe unnecessary for this applicant's purposes:

The application includes partial change of use to flexible A1 and A3 uses. Such uses are of greater concern to local people than B1(a) use, particularly because of the potential for a future owner or occupier to push these uses to their greatest commercial extent.

Our understanding is that the applicant (who is also the owner and will be the main new occupier) intends only to use the building for offices with some ancillary events / meeting / café spaces. Being ancillary, a change of use should not be necessary, and we ask the Planning Authority only to give consent that includes areas to be used as ancillary events / meeting / café space under the B1(a) consent.

C. Improving the design to maximise the opportunities presented by this unique site within the conservation area:

We are not convinced of the benefits of the first floor extension proposed for the single storey part of the building on Tower Street. No justification is given for altering the appearance of the listed building in this way. We would not necessarily oppose an extension that was more sympathetic and/or interesting in design terms, but we believe that the current design detracts from the streetscape.

Finally, we believe that there is a unique opportunity to make the garden and conservatory space something truly special in Seven Dials. The original 17th century design of the area by Thomas Neal included 7 triangles behind all the street frontages. The only ones that remain are Neal's Yard, Ching Court, and the garden of 22 Tower Street. Of these, the garden of 22 Tower Street is the only green space. Indeed, it is the only real garden in the whole of Seven Dials.

The current conservatory splits the garden in two, creating a dank space in the upper corner. And it opposes the surrounding buildings in terms of style. We support its replacement. However, the proposed replacement does similar things. We believe that a conservatory space that hugs the back of the building would serve the occupier better internally, and also open up the garden in a more cohesive way. We believe that a modest design would complement the Victorian architecture better than one that draws attention to itself.

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We look forward to further discussions, seeking to optimise the development of this beautiful and very special site.

Please refer to separate letter with photographs for our full comments.

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2019/0004/P	Richard Mark Friedhoff	10/03/2019 18:32:54	OBJ	<p data-bbox="875 132 2054 218">My name is Richard Friedhoff and I reside at 10 Tower Court, the last house in the lane that is closest to the Seven Dials monument. I moved here in 2012, because I was so impressed with the unique architectural and community character this little "village" in the heart of London.</p> <p data-bbox="875 253 2054 368">My own overall perspective is that it is neither feasible nor desirable to live in the past, that ongoing development of these areas is necessary and important, but that development should be done with the aim of preserving while enhancing these historic areas to benefit the entire diverse community of residents, retailers, and offices.</p> <p data-bbox="875 403 2054 458">I have complete faith that we can all work together for the benefit of all, especially where there are open minds, and respect for different points of view.</p> <p data-bbox="875 493 2054 608">Having reviewed the proposed plans for the redevelopment of the old school house on Tower Street, my principal concern focuses on the nature of the replacement structure for the deteriorating "orangery" in the back garden, the proposed new gates on the back fence, and for the general development of the garden in totality.</p> <p data-bbox="875 643 2054 697">To state it most simply, I do not believe that, at this time, sufficient design clarity has been provided to meaningfully assess the impact on the neighborhood.</p> <p data-bbox="875 732 2054 885">Last Thursday afternoon, I did have the pleasure of speaking telephonically to Mr. Ian Percival of the BRC, who was kind enough to have contacted all the neighbors, via a letter, inviting such communication. Mr. Percival assured me that the unique garden space was the main reason the BRC purchased the building, and that enhancement of the garden and any garden structure to be constructed, was very much in line with their projected use of the building. This was reassuring.</p> <p data-bbox="875 920 2054 1038">However, one concern I have, from my limited understanding of their somewhat vague proposed plans, is that a proposed, large entrance gate on Tower Court, leading to a modern lobby structure that would replace the orangery, would effectively turn the building around so that the new, de facto principal entrance would be on Tower Court, rather than on Tower Street.</p> <p data-bbox="875 1074 2054 1192">Mr. Percival assured me that, however it might appear in the plans, this was definitely not their intention. As he explained it, the new back gate and modern structure will be part of a special reception area for the members of the BRC, which is a trade association and, as such, it would be used exclusively to welcome members to their conferences on an irregular, if frequent, basis.</p> <p data-bbox="875 1227 2054 1281">According to Mr. Percival, the new back entry is not planned as a routine entrance for the employees of the BRC.</p> <p data-bbox="875 1316 2054 1497">Nonetheless, whatever the original intentions of the design team, a general concern is that this back entrance could gradually become the de facto entrance for the entire building, thereby compromising the quiet atmosphere of what is now a completely residential street. Therefore, it would be helpful to see these intentions codified in the proposal, not only for clarity for the owners and the community, but to make sure that, if and when the building might be resold in future, that permissions had not been inadvertently granted that allowed subsequent owners to deviate from the use intended by the BRC.</p>

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Restrictions that might help achieve this mutual objective might include hours of use, forbidding entrance or egress before 8AM or after 9PM for example, as well as regulations regarding smoking, signs reminding passers through that Tower Court is a residential street, to respect the neighbors, as is often done with restaurants and pubs in this neighborhood and across London.

I gather some of the other residents of Tower Court are also concerned that this new gate will be used to take trash bins in and out, especially in the early hours, and that the bins will be gathered on Tower Court itself. This should not be permitted.

Regarding the design of the new structure, it is obviously an architectural challenge to integrate the new structure interestingly, whether of a modern or a traditional style, into the surrounding Georgian and Victorian buildings while connecting it to the garden the new owners value so highly. Mr. Percival assured me that he wanted to enhance the garden in a manner that would enhance the appearance of their own building, as well as please members of the community.

However, to be fair, the photos of the simple white cardboard models presented in the plans to-date do not really make it possible to know what the structure will actually look like, or its impact on this special area. Is it glass or concrete, for example?

A misstep in the design, whether the gate, the new structure, or the landscaping, could well defile a unique green space that is visible to the community and that makes Tower Court a unique street in the heart of London.

Further detail that would help everyone understand where this is going would be the landscape plan, the precise design and materials of the new structure, the way it communicates with the new gate, and the design of the gate itself.

These details will make all the difference in whether these changes enhance or compromise this historic street. These designs should be developed in detail and shared with the community. The designs shared to-date, are inadequate for judging the impact.

One failure of the previous owner that should definitely not be perpetuated is total disregard for the appearance of the garden from Tower Court. Currently, there is a tired and dirty bamboo fence that completely blocks any perception of the garden from Tower Court, conveying the feeling that the previous owners couldn't have cared less about Tower Court, and creating a "dead zone," neglected feeling, on Tower Court that attracts anti-social behavior.

I would hope that the new owners will allow some visibility through the fence, in line with whatever need for privacy that they might have, so as to avoid this "dead zone" feeling. I would point out that there are countless garden squares across London that afford privacy to those within, without denigrating those on the outside. In any case, it would seem that creating a pleasant curated atmosphere on Tower Court would support the BRC's stated intention of making Tower Court a special entrance created for their esteemed members.

There is some concern among the residents of Tower Court regarding this new gate as has, I presume, been

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conveyed to the council. However, I personally think it is all-manageable if there is an authentic intention to enhance the garden, the new structure, and the general atmosphere of Tower Court.

I would, however, specifically object to the proposed bicycle entrance, quite simply a 2nd proposed gate that would also break up the fence, because it will attract bicycle riding in the lane, and because it seems unnecessary if there is already a new principal gate to the garden which can provide access to the proposed bicycle area. [See below, regarding Arboreal Impact.]

A natural concern for anyone living on Tower Court will be any de facto smoking area and anything that attracts people talking on cell phones as these reverberate to a surprising degree into the residences. Sitting in my bedroom or living room, I am often tempted to complete the sentences of slow talking cell phone users on Tower Court in order to help them reach a conclusion to their conversation a bit sooner, so audible are their conversations. If there were something the council can do to prevent more of this, it would be most helpful.

This might include regulating the hours of use of this area given that the proposed gated entrance and structure are on a completely residential lane. This may not be relevant to the BRC, but these restricted hours might be important when the building would be sold in the future. I would hope that such uses would not be permitted before 8AM and beyond 9PM, for example.

I would hope that, given the rarity of gardens for commercial office structures, and Mr. Percival's description of the garden as a principal reason that the building was purchased by the BRC, that the BRC will at least consider the possibility of further minimizing this structure beyond the present plans, or removing it altogether without replacement, or replacement with only an underground structure.

While removing it altogether might be an unusual proposal, it would be a great day for the building, the ultimate in restoration, and perhaps even help with their intention of specially welcoming their members. Gardens are wondrous spaces, especially in the heart of the city. It is difficult to imagine a structure with the kind of "wow factor," that a fantastic garden can have, especially in the city.

Given that the greater likelihood is that the BRC will proceed to build a new structure, I hope the BRC will make every effort to deliver more detailed design proposals so as to assure that the structure does not compromise the environment of Victorian and Georgian Architecture that forms this amazing neighborhood and, specifically, this amazing street.

It would be a all-to-common tragedy if their design fails to live up to the amazing potential. This is an rare opportunity to get it right, to do something special. Perhaps even a garden roof to the structure, for example of the kind that I have recently seen in Lincoln Center in New York City. There is a small pavilion containing a restaurant amongst the opera, symphony, theater, and ballet buildings that has a sloping, grassy roof. It works wonderfully there.

Perhaps the BRC could make the new structure nearly invisible, out of architectural glass. Whatever the plan, this garden deserves something special.

On a more practical note, I would object to any placement of the air-cooling equipment in the garden or on the new structure to be built in the garden. The garden is an oasis of green in the heart of the city and should not

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be an area in which to dump noisy machinery.

Arboreal Impact: In the arboreal impact plan I am relieved to see that there is planned preservation of the two tallest trees. However, there is a red zone labeled "Area of Grp 1 to be removed" which indicates that some lower trees will be removed. I strenuously object to the removal of these trees which are visible from all of my windows and which are visible to everyone overlooking this garden and to everyone passing through this historic lane.

The only conceivable benefit to removing these trees is to make an additional gate possible for bicycles, but the proposed bicycle area should be accessible from the larger proposed gate and the second gate is an unnecessary further breakup of the ironwork fence. There is already one existing gate. No one on the street especially welcomes the second gate but at least I understand it's importance for the planned use of the building and if it is built sympathetically, it can work. However, perhaps 3 gates, in this short length of iron fencing, is one gate too many.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these plans.

Richard Mark Friedhoff
