



Dear David Fowler,

I write as the leaseholder of [REDACTED], with my concerns regarding the approved plans to allow a woodworking shop to take over part of the garages below Stoneleigh Terrace.

The noise nuisance currently being experienced as a result of the clearing of the space, before the woodworking activity has even begun, has already caused my neighbours considerable concern. If this is the result of the clearing, what will be the result of the actual woodworking?

I note in Camden Council's letter of June 19, 2019, to RCKa Architects, stipulations regarding noise nuisance.

Provisions regarding noise pollution

Section 5 states, "Noise levels at a point 1 metre external to sensitive facades shall be at least 5dB(A) less than the existing background measurement (LA90), expressed in dB(A) when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation unless the plant/equipment hereby permitted will have a noise that has a distinguishable, discrete continuous note (whine, hiss, screech, hum) and/or if there are distinct impulses (bangs, clicks, clatters, thumps), then the noise levels from that piece of plant/equipment at any sensitive façade shall be at least 10dB(A) below the LA90, expressed in dB(A)."

I ask for the definition of "sensitive facades" within the meaning of Section 5. In particular, I am concerned as to whether the word *façade* is used in its usual sense, of a vertical elevation, or if it includes all the interfaces between the workshop area and the residential dwellings? My specific concern is what stipulations about noise pollution apply to the interior of the residential properties.

Environmental assessment

The noise pollution already being experienced as a result of the clearing activity raises concerns about the environmental assessment performed in re-designating the use of the space from garage space to workshop space. The noise insulation between the flats is very effective. Neighbours hardly ever hear one another—except, I should add, when one of us uses a hammer drill, when the noise runs through the whole building. That is, however, a rare event and neighbours have learned to consult one another to check, for example, whether such noise will interfere with the nap times of infants, of whom there are two near my property. None of us has been anticipating the sort of continuous whining and hissing or the bangs, clatters, and bumps that are mentioned in Section 5 and which bring to mind an industrial plant, not a kiddie-related activity, which is all that any of us foresaw. Has an environmental assessment taken place, and if so, would you be good enough to send it to me or refer me to the report number and details of where I may obtain it?

Sound insulation

I understand that provision has been made to introduce the sound insulation. This is obviously necessary because it was not necessary given the original use of the space. There is no condition in the documents I have seen regarding accountability for ensuring its effectiveness, or the relevant technical measures, except those in Section 5. In light of the recent noise caused by the clearing work, this appears to be an oversight and an error. Can you tell me what

specifications have been drawn up to determine predictably and reliably the effectiveness of the sound insulation that will be installed?

Hours of work

The hours of demolition and construction work are limited to 8.00 to 18.00 on weekdays and so on, but this stipulation is obsolete because it does not take into account our 24-hour economy, when not everyone works a 9.00 to 5.00 day, nor the presence of retirees and pre-school infants or others who do not work during office hours. Some self-employed residents do paperwork at home. While the noise is an inconvenience during the clearing and construction phase, the point about time restrictions underlines the concerns about the sort of industrial noise anticipated in Section 5. In today's world, one simply cannot assume that residents will be out between the times designated for workshop activities in Section 4: from 9.00 to 18.30. Of course this redoubles all the questions about environmental assessment and sound insulation.

Adequacy of the consultation

In light of the recent noise in the clearing phase, one cannot avoid the conclusion that the consultation was wholly inadequate. For some neighbours who travel for work, it was too brief and they missed the opportunity to object. Others whose public-spirited impulses led them to acknowledge the children's workshop as a good cause saw no reason to object. Experience has changed that. We had no means of anticipating the degree of noise conductivity and noise leakage until the noise began. It is only *now*, when we actually have the noise invading our homes, that an adequate consultation can begin. Surely it ought to have been possible to provide a practical measure of what we were letting ourselves in for, and because that was not done, no effective consultation was performed.

Aside from the lessons of current experience, none of us recalls being put on notice of the risk to our peaceable enjoyment of the property. I note that the right to "peaceably hold and enjoy" the property is specified in my lease. That right, defensible in law, is incompatible with the whining, hissing, screeching, and so on, listed in Section 5.

In light of the failure to put leaseholders and tenants on notice of the risk of such industrial noise pollution, one may conclude that the consultation was inadequate and that the Council may be at risk of breaching its responsibilities.

Since the residents of Stoneleigh Terrace above the planned workshop premises are the principal group of residents, perhaps the only residents, whose legal rights are at risk, any consultation which took into account the views of others on the estate was likely to dilute the views of the directly affected residents. A remedial measure would be, before one goes any further, to pause so that an experiment may be conducted in which the affected tenants, and those tenants alone, are exposed to the level of noise that the workshop will generate and are subsequently polled on their views. That would count as an effective consultation.

Alternative uses

In light of the council's responsibilities to tax-payers and residents, were residents asked which of various alternative uses they wished to see the space put to, and in what proportions? Or was the workshop the only option the consultation asked them to consider?

Garages

About a year ago I learned that there was a 44-person waiting list for garages on the Whittington Estate. A Council employee told me that some of the empty garages are in need of repair and restoration, and that the Council has an interest in renovating and letting out disused garages as soon as possible in order to generate revenue. One of the anticipated effects of the wood workshop is that it will reduce vandalism, which I was told was one of the reasons some garages fell into disuse. Is there, accordingly, a plan to restore some of the garage space below Stoneleigh Terrace to its original use, in anticipation of the reduced vandalism? The Council employee was correct: the Council does have a fiduciary responsibility to steward its resource responsibly, to the benefit of tax-payers and residents. Restoring the garages to use would generate revenue and would provide an amenity for which there is measurable and enormous demand. I therefore ask what plans there are to restore and repair the garages on the estate; and specifically how many garages below Stoneleigh Terrace are being restored? I should be grateful for your voluntary

compliance with my request that you inform me of the current length of the waiting list for garages on the Whittington Estate, so that I am not obliged to submit a request for that information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

Suitability of the premises

I note the enthusiastic support of ward councillors for the plan. Do they really think it best to shove our young people underground? I speak as someone who worked for several years as a play centre staff member in Camden schools and as a playleader in adventure playgrounds in Brent and Islington. Subjecting the young to the concentrated sound in an underground space and to the absence of air and natural light seems rather a dismal fate for them. Is this really the best Camden can do? Does Camden really think that youngsters will want to be underground rather than outside? Who will monitor the success of the project, and according to what measures?

Lifetime of the project

What provision has been made to assess the success, environmental impact, and continued feasibility of the project in light of experience? Why is the length of the period before such an assessment not specified in the planning permission? Has any provision been made to assess the impact of the project on the young people and on the lives of tenants, leaseholders, and other stakeholders?

For your convenience, I list my questions below:

- ∞ I ask for the definition of “sensitive facades” within the meaning of Section 5 of Camden Council’s letter of June 19, 2019, to RCKa Architects.
- ∞ What stipulations about noise pollution apply to the interior of the residential properties?
- ∞ Has an environmental assessment taken place, and if so, would you be good enough to send it to me or refer me to the report number and details of where I may obtain it?
- ∞ What specifications have been drawn up to determine predictably and reliably the effectiveness of the sound insulation that will be installed?
- ∞ What remedial measures will Camden Council introduce in light of the inadequacy of the consultation, which failed to forewarn residents adequately about the risk of noise?
- ∞ How many garages below Stoneleigh Terrace are being restored to their use as garages?
- ∞ What is the current length of the waiting list for garages on the Whittington Estate?
- ∞ How many garages on the Whittington Estate are awaiting repair or restoration?
- ∞ Were above ground premises offered to the workshop, or was this all they were offered?
- ∞ Were alternative possible uses for the space canvassed in the consultation, or was the workshop the only use contemplated?
- ∞ What provision has been made to assess the impact of the workshop on the young people and on the lives of directly affected tenants, leaseholders, and other stakeholders, and after what interval?

A final question: Which ward councillors and which council officers live directly above the workshop? Although I appreciate the interests of parents who want their children to continue to enjoy the workshop, would they want whining, hissing, screeching, humming, bangs, clicks, clatters, and thumps and their basement? Would you?

Thank you for your attention.

Best wishes,

Dr Patrick Hagopian