HAMPSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM



12 August 2019

Matthew Dempsey

Planning Solutions Team

Camden Council

Re: **2019/3365/P 116 Heath Street, NW3 1DR**

Dear Mr Dempsey,

We believe that the proposal to retain a modern security shutter in Stamford Close is contrary to DH1 and DH2 of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan as well as H40 of the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement.

Security grills are discouraged by the Conservation Area statement, specifically H40, which asserts that “the introduction of security measures can detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area”. It further says that the Council will prefer the use of security measures that do not require external shutters.

The Neighbourhood Plan DH1 states that proposals that fail to respect and enhance the character of the area and the way it functions will not be supported, while DH2 states that proposals must seek to protect and/or enhance buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The conservation statement describes Stamford Close as “an atmospheric, York stone paved courtyard linking the Square to Heath Street,” one of the many “picturesque and intimate pedestrian alleys generate surprise and delight”, according to the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan. The building itself, no. 116, is recognised as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. While the security grill is on the side of the building, it nevertheless negatively impacts the Conservation Area by introducing industrial materials in this predominately 18th and 19th century setting.

We sympathise with the security problems that the business owner has suffered but urge the applicant to seek a security method that does not damage the Conservation Area.

Sincerely,

Janine Griffis

Chair, Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum

appreciate that this application is made on behalf of a popular and well-known dentist.

I applaud the attitude of the agent in that they state they make the application in order to enable residents and

conservation groups :

*• To provide the opportunity for final debate upon any fundamental design and access principles prior to*

*determination*

and it is in this spirit that I make my comments.

- Firstly the shutter is not installed on Heath Street, but Stamford Close, which is a small, tranquil square, with

some distinctive houses, accessed by two passage-way entrances, one on Heath Street, and the other on

Hampstead Square.

- This style of alleyway is typical of many in Hampstead, they are narrow, act as connectors to different areas of

terrain, and there are often residences tucked in between. They are particularly common along Heath Street

and allow people to travel easily between areas without having to “go round the houses”. They mostly

connect the upper reaches heights of Heath St, to the lower terrains, an example being Holly Bush Steps,

leading to Holly Mount.

- These passage ways are part of historic Hampstead and need conservation. In between, there are houses

recessed into the walls, or create an enclave, as in the case of Stamford Close, or Golden Square.

The agents say that the shutter is small and that it is for security reasons. However I believe that:

- The shutter is of a size that is significant, is modern, and detracts from the nature and character of Stamford

Close.

- It is highly intrusive and is strongly incongruous. This style of closed shutter is common on many run down

high streets and town centre. I suggest that an outlandish shutter in the context of these surroundings is more

likely to attract burglaries as it can be seen to be “fair game”. We all know that such a style of shutter has a

tendency to attract graffiti - this white style in this situation is likely to be particularly attractive.

- It is possible, though probably more expensive, to have a door, that is secure and more in keeping. I am sure

that medical and other high end businesses have to think about this all the time, especially for conservation

areas. I attach examples of existing and more sympathetic styles of security protection in Stamford Close.

- The first door of the applicant property in Stamford Close is in fact an ordinary door, and not a shutter. If that

is sufficient for protection, why cannot something of a more sympathetic style than a shutter be installed?

- It may be cheaper and more convenient for the agents to use a shutter solution, but in the interests of

Hampstead conservation, such historic areas must be prevented from degradation, and this starts by

preserving its small, as well as bigger, features. Small degradations lead to bigger ones, then the special

historic, and spacial perception and character of Hampstead will gradually suffer.

- I also believe, though it may not be of attractive contemplation for the applicant right now, that a better, more

attractive door, is likely to improve business. Our high streets and businesses need to look well maintained

and of appropriate design to attract footfall and custom. In an expensive area such as Hampstead,

expectations are high otherwise customers could choose from a 1000 areas that do not have the character of

Hampstead.

- I attach photos which I hope are illustrative of the points made.

- In summary I think the current application breaches Policies D1,D2, D3 of the Camden Local Plan, and

Policies DH1, DH2, of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan

- Unless the agent is able