

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2019/6001/P	B. Bennett	05/01/2020 14:07:21	OBJ	Dear Josh Lawlor

I am writing to object to this proposal.

It seems from the planning application the change of use of the building is 50% change from office use, however it is not clear from the floor plans what the previous 50% office space would be used for. The plan states "as existing". It seems likely there are plans to use this building for hotel / hostel / house of multiple occupation using the "50%" office space/back room for use as hostel/ dormitory area. Although there is no direct visible access between the two areas, there is easy access between the spaces by doors at the front and back of building. The living/dining/kitchen area seems proposed to cater for a very large number of people. There are apparently two bathrooms both with WCs in this plan although only one is named "bathroom".

Why two bathrooms in a "one bedroom flat"? Two bathrooms with WCs and such a large living / dining / kitchen space in such a small area and the unstated use for the large back room suggests planned large scale hostel / dormitory accommodation use which would significantly change the use of the building.

This is similar to the application at 162 Agar Grove, London, almost opposite 93 Agar Grove, 2014/0857/P, stated conversion of a ground floor restaurant to 1x2 bed dwelling. In that case the planned 3 shower rooms and 3 WCs suggested the plan was for hostel use not a 1x2 bed dwelling. The large number of shower rooms / WCs suggested planned large scale capacity and turnover which would significantly change the use of the building. In that case building was granted change of use to 1x2 bed dwelling, however in the decision from Camden Council it is stated "the residential accommodation approved is not permitted for use as holiday lettings or any other form of temporary sleeping accommodation defined as being occupied by the same person(s) for a consecutive period of 90 nights or less. The intention to use it as this from the start seems likely as there were later 2 applications to change the use (2015/3507/P Retrospective change of use from house (Class C3) to a holiday let property (Class C1) and 2014/1822/P Retrospective change of use from house (Class C3) to a holiday let property (Class C1) at first to third floor level). These applications were both refused with warning of enforcement action to be taken. However, it appears to have been used for years and apparently continues to be used as hostel / dormitory accommodation for mass turnover / multiple occupation. The main front room seems to be a multiple bed dormitory with the large windows where the restaurant front was nearly always with curtains drawn and a large chipboard construction has been added to the front.

There is a huge problem in this area with not only that building but other nearby buildings being used for undesignated purposes as hostel dormitories with extremely high turnover of transitory visitors or workers. This has resulted in the major loss of permanent residential housing. This type of concentrated temporary occupation is having a negative effect on this traditionally mainly residential Camden conservation area. Large numbers of transient visitors put pressure on local services including environmental health and waste removal and dramatically alter the character of the area and cause added noise and other disturbances.

The proposed change of the shop front to match historical shop front, using traditional materials, and reinstatement of the original opening alongside with a timber framed sash window I believe would be a great improvement to the appearance. However obscured glass up to the height of 1.6 m from pavement level would not look appropriate. The reinstatement of a traditional shop front to the side I believe would also improve the appearance, however it appears only one window there would be clear glazing.

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Although this building has remained unused and has been neglected for some years, it would be a loss to the community to lose yet another small business potential amenity / office, especially if it would degenerate into a dormitory hostel. Unfortunately over time the front has been changed in a way that does not fit in with the surrounding conservation area buildings. In its present state it probably has been hard to let but if the appearance were improved as described in this application it would be a prime site for an office / independent business amenity.
