

Our Ref: DBB/OCO1/1
Your Ref: 2019/4582/P

10 October 2019

Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8EQ

Dear Sirs

RE: 60 Charlotte Street - Objection to 2019/4582/P

We have been instructed by Mr O'Connell, the owner of 16 Scala Street, to assess the current application at 60 Charlotte Street. Having considered the proposal and adopted policies of the Local Development Plan, we write to OBJECT on his behalf.

The objection falls into three main areas:

- The proposed terrace
- New access to offices via Scala Street
- Additional first floor windows

We would like to confirm that it is our position that the alterations to Charlotte Street are welcomed as are other measures on Scala Street to design out anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.

The proposed terrace

The "terrace" is not established, we understand that for the past ten years that no one has been seen using the roof for this purpose. Therefore the description in the covering letter that the new doorway would "*provide improved access to the existing terrace*" is grossly misleading. Further, that if the LPA have provided pre-application on this incorrect basis that the positive, albeit without prejudice position, must change. This is evident by the change in floor levels and the DAS admission that this is approximately 0.45m which would require the installation of three steps.

If this area was to be opened up as an unrestricted terrace then it would bring activity along Scala Street, overlooking neighbouring residents, particularly the bedrooms of 16 and 17 Scala Street, and causing a noise nuisance. This is clearly contrary to Local Plan Policy A1, which seeks to manage the impact of a development.



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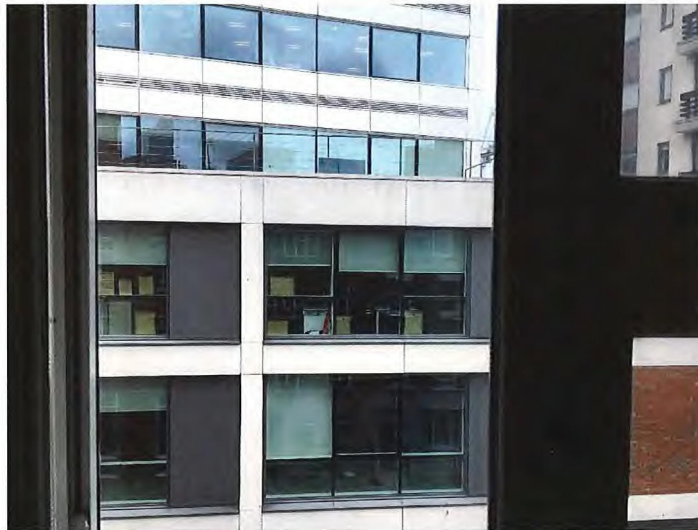
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The first consideration of Policy A1 criterion (a) is to “ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected”. Factors relating to this are visual privacy and noise, both elements which will be compromised if this access were to be granted. The following photograph taken from inside a bedroom highlights the close proximity of the third-floor roof to the residential properties. The noise would be unobstructed as would the invasion of privacy.



The application should have been transparent to the effect that the “roof terrace” is not an existing and used part of the building. The application should have been submitted to request permission to use the roof as a terrace, which clearly would have resulted in far more information on this new aspect being considered.

The approved plans for application 2005/2769/P do not give permission for this area to be used as a roof terrace. In fact the balustrade that has been erected is not clearly visible on the approved elevations, which reflects that this was not permitted to be used as a terrace (in addition to the logistical access problems). The noise survey undertaken for that application similarly makes no reference to the potential for noise and disturbance.

There is also concern regarding the suitability and robustness of the existing balustrade, which is ornamental in its current function, but that may require reinforcing or replacing to meet modern building control regulations. This would need to be considered as part of the application as it would have a visual impact on the building and its significance within the conservation area.

The intended use of the proposed terrace is not specified and the applicant considers that hours of use are not applicable to this application. There is no justification or need for the introduction of this terrace overlooking the quieter residential side street.

New access to offices via Scala Street

The proposed changes at ground floor level seek to infill the building to remove covered areas and bring forward a recessed doorway. These changes are supported, however the need and impact of a new access to the offices is not needed and would change the character of this predominantly residential street.

The alterations would result in the pavement width being reduced and when the new access is considered in the context of the cycle hire there is a good chance of conflicting uses of the pavement along Scala Street, which is contrary to Policy A1(c) which explicitly resists *“development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network”*.

At the moment the only doorway directly onto Scala Street is the fire escape for the restaurant. The offices front onto Charlotte Street and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should ensure that activity is kept on the main thoroughfares to preserve the environment in residential side streets. As required by Policy A1(b). This key characteristic of the area has been highlighted in the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, which considers a key aspect of the area includes *“a contrast between busy commercial streets including Tottenham Court Road and quieter, more residential areas”*.

The increase in comings and goings along Scala Street cannot be justified as the development proposal seeks a new frontage to the offices from Charlotte Street and it is that access that should remain as the primary and sole point of entry to the offices. If this proposed second access was removed then it would overcome this element of the objection.

Additional first floor windows

The application seeks to remove three solid panels at first floor level and replace these with three floor to ceiling windows. Alongside an inevitable increase of light pollution to Scala Street the distances between the office and residential properties is too close.

The distance between the office and 16 Scala Street is circa 11m, which is below the 18m specified in the Camden Planning Guidance Amenity (2018). The guidance does accept that where *“there is an existing street or public space, this space is considered to already provide an adequate separation between properties and so the 18m guideline will not apply. However, care should be taken to reduce*

overlooking from the street into habitable rooms near to a street or public space, particularly bedrooms". However, there is no justification or need for permitting new windows only 11m from the bedrooms of 16 Scala Street, which is also contrary to Principle 9 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, which seeks that development retains a good standard of amenity for existing occupiers.

The previous extension to the office building brought the windows from around 18m from the first-floor residential windows of Scala Street to the 11m now. It is already an imposing relationship with both perceived and actual overlooking compromising the living conditions of the residential properties.



The photographs illustrate that over the years the building massing and windows have crept nearer to the properties along Scala Street, breaching the 18m separation. Adding additional windows at the proposed locations is not needed and will further harm the privacy of Scala Street.

We would be obliged if you could take these points into consideration when making your recommendation and decision.

Should you require anything further at this time please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

W.F. Planning Ltd
[Redacted contact information]