

17 April 2020

Ms Nora Andreea Constantinescu  
Planning Officer  
Regeneration and Planning, Supporting Communities  
London Borough of Camden  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 5 Pancras Square  
London N1C 4AG

Dear Ms Andreea Constantinescu

**Air Studios, Lyndhurst Hall, Lyndhurst Road, London NW3 5NG**  
**Planning & Listed Building Consent applications (2019/6387/P and 2020/0382/L)**

I am writing in response to the objection raised by the Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee (HCAAC) on 8 April 2020.

The thrust of the HCAAC's objection focuses upon the design of the proposed new glazed infill structure which will replace the existing 1990s glazed barrel vault.

1. The HCAAC considers that the *"...existing barrel vault roof was carefully designed and detailed to fit within the constraints of the existing building wings and different masses."* The existing infill runs between the main section of Air Studios, the original Congregational Church hall, and the smaller wing to the west known as Lyndhurst Cottage. It has a glazed barrel vault set within a heavy timber framework, with chunky structural ribs and a subdivided clerestorey detail to the upstand. Providing the transition between the barrel vault and the surrounding historic brickwork is a solid, flat section of roof which creates a prominent internal soffit. In views through the existing reception area the infill structure significantly disrupts upward views to the attractive historic facades of the surrounding building (see Fig 1).



Fig 1 The existing barrel vaulted infill structure looking south through the ground floor reception area.

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2. The HCAAC goes on to say that *"....a similar effort is required for this proposal to avoid a missed design opportunity."* The proposed glazed infill clearly takes a different form to the existing structure in order to provide the required additional accommodation and improvements to the layout and circulation of space. However, within this the proposed infill responds to the massing of the enclosing historic wings and has been carefully designed so as to avoid physical and visual conflict with the varying position of fenestration on the surrounding facades and so as to reconcile different floor levels. It is not clear how or why the proposed infill should *"....relate to the two different roof heights of the enclosing wings"* given the significantly different scale and massing of the main section of Air Studios and Lyndhurst Cottage. The design intention is for a rational and contemporary infill structure between the two differing elements of the site which would be visually subordinate in terms of its height and scale. Its simple contemporary profile, with a very shallow pitch to allow for water dispersal, will allow the varied and lively roof profile of the listed building to retain its visual primacy.

3. The HCAAC are of the view that the proposed infill *"....should eschew roof glazing whose purpose is irrelevant and compromising both to the adjoining wings and attempts to reduce light pollution."* The proposed design is highly glazed as this is a well rehearsed and successful means of approaching the internalisation of previously open space within a historic site. The late 19th century Romanesque architecture of the listed building has a strong sense of solidity and physical presence however the proposed glazed infill will provide a legible and distinct architectural juxtaposition between the two phases of the building. The new areas at ground and 1st floor levels within the infill will be light filled and spacious, allowing a full appreciation of the surrounding fabric and architecture of the listed building through its glazed elevations and roof. The proposed infill will be characterised by crisp detailing and high quality finishes and will be more lightweight and visually permeable than the existing structure, particularly within the 1st floor dining area, where new visual connections will be possible with the surrounding historic fabric.

Critically, the junction between the proposed glazed infill and the surrounding historic fabric has been formulated so as to provide a 'light touch' between the new structure and the adjacent historic brickwork which is a considerable improvement when compared with the crude junction and heavy flat roof and internal soffit of the existing barrel vaulted structure.

In summary, the proposals have been designed to respond sensitively to the listed building and to improve aesthetically and architecturally upon the existing glazed infill. Enhanced sightlines will be created and the surrounding facades of the building will be more visible and readily appreciable, with a clean, contemporary juxtaposition between new and old fabric. The associated proposals to upgrade the reception area, toilets and catering facilities are part of a considered strategy to ensure that Air Studios remains attractive and competitive within its industry and that the building evolves and responds to the changing requirements of the business. The scheme is considered to strike an appropriate balance between these objectives and the preservation, and in this case enhancement, of the special interest of this fine Grade II listed building.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Walker  
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