

STATEMENT of Mr John Joseph, 24 Rosslyn Hill

1. Introduction

1.1 My name is John Joseph and I live with my wife Sandra at 24 Rosslyn Hill, next door to the Police Station at no. 26.

We moved into 24 Rosslyn Hill in 1993. The house is 300 years old, semi-detached to no. 22 and is Grade 2 Listed, as are many neighbouring properties.

1.2 We are directly next to No 26, the Police Station. Our garden runs parallel to the proposed play area, and each room on that side of the house has single-glazed windows facing the Police Station. Noise coming from the playground would be heard not only in our garden but most rooms of our home.

1.3 You will understand our concern about the inevitable noise from children gathered and playing outside in the areas rear of the Police Station building. I have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. Children are noisy – particularly when they are gathered together. They squeal, shriek, and shout – that is what children do, and what they need to do.

2. Noise

2.1 Abacus has indicated that the playground would be used for two hours maximum each day. That simply does not stack up.

2.2 Where would those children who are to use the Downshire Hill entrance to the school wait to be let in to the buildings each morning? On the pavement seems rather dangerous. Or would they be let into the playground and that use up part of the “2 hours”? The same point applies to the afternoon, at pick-up time.

2.3 Moving on to playtimes, I understand that different year-groups would use the playground at different times. If the School is open from 8am until 4pm that is EIGHT hours. Presumably, each child would get at least 1 morning break, time in the playground after lunch and an afternoon break. The proposals need to be scrutinized, it's hard to see how the total usage of the playground would be 2 hours maximum each day.

2.4 I also recall that Abacus consider part of the playground should not be subject to the “2 hours maximum”, that is worrying.

2.5 I have not yet seen the wording of a suggested Condition or Section 106 restriction on use of the playground. I know from my commercial life that the effectiveness of such controls is all in the drafting.

You will understand therefore that mention of a “2 hours maximum” is simply not reassuring.

2.6 The high-pitched sounds that children make would be audible not only in our premises, but because of the amphitheatre effect of sound-waves travelling from the Police Station through mainly Victorian terraced houses to The Heath, it would resonate throughout this tranquil enclave at the heart of Hampstead's Conservation area, affecting residents living in Rosslyn Hill, Downshire Hill, Pilgrims Lane, Keats Grove Hampstead Hill Gardens and others.

The reverse happens with the Hampstead Bank Holiday Fairs, which are highly audible throughout the neighbourhood.

Putting a school into the Police Station would mean noise pollution for the surrounding occupiers.

2.7 Numerous Noise studies have linked noise pollution to increased anxiety, depression, heart disease and a threat to public health and well-being. On a personal note my wife has suffered from Tinnitus for many years and high frequency noise aggravates it.

2.8 The behavioural changes as a result of Covid 19 will mean more and more people will be working from home. If there is noise outside, residents won't be able to keep their windows open or make use of their gardens. The NHS have stressed the importance of fresh air in homes to stop the virus from spreading and opening windows.

Double-glazing is not really an option for a Listed house.

3. Pavement Congestion

3.1 Congestion is not just limited to traffic on the roads. Pedestrian safety would still be a worry even if all pupils were to walk to school.

3.2 The pavement in Downshire Hill hardly exists. Although the pavement on Rosslyn Hill is deeper, put together I do not see how both pavements could accommodate 210 children and a similar number of adults - together with pushchairs, scooters and bikes - all arriving at a similar time in the morning and in the afternoon awaiting to collect their children.

3.3 These areas are meant to be pavements. They would still be used by local residents coming and going to Tube and train stations, shopping, children rushing to their various existing schools, people visiting the Royal Free Hospital or the busy Keats NHS Surgery. Keats Surgery is opposite the Police Station, in

Downshire Hill, and in non-Covid times it is bustling with elderly people, some in wheelchairs, and parents with young children. It would be virtually impossible for people to walk safely on the pavements, especially with young children heading for Abacus school.

3.4 My serious concern is that children could easily be pushed onto the busy road, which I think is one of the reasons the Government stated that no schools should be allowed to open on to main roads.

3.5 There are additional highway safety issues, because the garage for our house is between no's 24 and 26. To access our garage, we have to drive across the pavement of Rosslyn Hill. We use that garage regularly – it is the only parking that our house has.

As we need access from our garage at all times, I am seriously concerned about a child being knocked over as I reverse out onto Rosslyn Hill.

4. Conclusion

4.1 My wife and I have for many years been involved with children, their education and their well-being.

4.2 My wife is a child psychotherapist who writes books on children, one of which was adopted by the NSPCC as part of their Full Stop Campaign. One project that she has instigated is the development of a halfway house for young people leaving local authority care, some of whom were living on the streets.

My wife needs to have peace and quiet both for researching her books, and talking with her clients.

4.3 I am Chairman of a charity, JBD, providing sheltered accommodation, for blind and disabled people of all ages. We have seven sites around London, with 320 purpose-built apartments providing rent-free homes for some 350 people. We do not receive any Government funding.

As Chairman, my input is needed - at any time - for urgent help. I need to be able to concentrate when I'm working at home for the

charity. I am also regularly out and about, visiting residents of our sheltered accommodation and talking to potential donors – I need my car for that.

The above together with many other charitable works were the reason I received my MBE in 2016 -

“For services to disadvantaged young people and people with disabilities ‘

4.4 I have mentioned these facts because I want it to be clear that Sandra and I are not against children, quite the contrary, and we fully appreciate the importance of community facilities, such as schools.

Hampstead Police Station is simply the wrong place for a Primary school.