

From: Michael Carley [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 September 2020 15:13
To: Planning
Subject: Comment on Belgrove House proposal

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

Dear Mr Sexton,

From the roof of our building, one can look down on the King's Cross – Argyle Sq. – Regent's Quarter neighbourhood, stretching from Argyle Street in the west to Northdown Street in the east. The observer sees an enormous variety of roofscapes, including the Regency terraces next to Belgrove House, and on to the significant architectural achievement of Regent's Quarter. Although there is much variety, there is also a beautiful harmony to this neighbourhood because no building is over six stories, and all respect the architectural significance of King's Cross station, as the neighbourhood's most important building. It is this combination of variety and harmony which gives the neighbourhood a unique urban character.

Sadly the development proposal for Belgrove House, a brutalist ten-storey building, is now set to utterly spoil this harmonious townscape. However laudable its intended use, this proposal is without a doubt one of the most inappropriate, over-blown and just plain ugliest for the neighbourhood to have been made in a long time. My neighbour's first response is that it "it is bad architecture, hideous and too high". We agree. The proposal is reminiscent of the worst kind of brutalist university buildings from the 1970s. It represents in many ways a tragedy for Kings Cross and a crass intrusion immediately across from the restored forecourt of the station.

Any sustainable development proposal should begin by considering options for retaining and redeveloping Belgrove House, retaining its handsome 'stripped classical' façade, redeveloping the interior and adding a modest, appropriate addition of a few storeys to the roofline. Of importance in any development is to respect the historic fabric of the significant Georgian buildings on three sides of Argyle Square and in Belgrove and Crestfield Streets, and the Regency buildings, east of the site and facing Kings Cross Station, which have recently been 'saved' from demolition by an active local campaign. This suggests design sympathetic to Georgian and Regency architecture and which complements favourably the existing heights of the Georgian buildings.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Michael Carley, PhD
Professor of the Built Environment (retired)