

**Application Number** 2020/3461/P

Chester Road Hostel , 2 Chester Road

## OBJECTION

### Present building

This is a widely acclaimed modernist building, 1970-1974, by Bill Forrest an important member of Sidney Cook's Camden Architect's Department.

The applicant's Heritage Statement shockingly denigrates this outstanding architect.

The brief for a Mental Health Hostel was to provide a protected environment in which it succeeded with generous access to well laid out gardens full of trees and shrubs. It is sensitively sited back from the surrounding streets and at two storeys high does not impede important views west and north to the Highgate Ridge from surrounding streets.

### Townscape

The quality of townscape between the settings of Islington and Camden conservation areas is especially important. Islington views from the St Johns Grove CA west into Dartmouth Park towards the Highgate Ridge and Dartmouth Park CA views looking up Chester Road where the Belvedere building (72 Dartmouth Park Hill) a heritage asset, forms an important visual stop. DPCAACMS also notes the key view west down Chester Road towards the Highgate Ridge. Paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 refer to the semi-rural nature of the Dartmouth Park CA and its quality of darkness at night.

### Proposed building scale and massing

The size and scale of proposed is overdevelopment of this small site resulting in a building which would be dominant and intrusive. At over a storey higher than the two storey buildings opposite in Chester Road it would present an overbearing cliff face frontage blocking light and views and harming amenity of residents. Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Plan policy DC1(c) states "[Ensure] that multi-unit developments in areas predominantly characterised by traditional terraced, semi-detached and detached housing will have scale and massing which respects that of surrounding buildings".

The buildings enlarged footprint encroaches on Colva Walk reducing it to a narrow pathway, on one side the cliff face of a four storey building which would no doubt encourage all kinds of anti-social behaviour.

### Design

The design should reflect the context and urban grain of the immediate area of Victorian development and its palette of colours. The visual aspect of the proposed industrialised and prefabricated building on the contrary does none of this. To make matters worse the cladding of green tiles will make this building forever a 'blot on the landscape' to be locally resented by residents and harming community cohesion.

This proposed building by virtue of its scale, massing and industrialised visual appearance would neither preserve or enhance the character and appearance the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area.

Until a replacement building is shown to respect the many CLP, DPCAACMS and DPNF Local Plan policies for conservation areas, and address the issue of sustainability, the case for demolition has not been made.