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OBJECTION: Charlotte Street CAAC response to 52 Tottenham Street comprehensive redevelopment.

Four of our members have inspected the application documents and visited the site. Upon visiting the site we were in agreement that the current building is a post war rebuild. Despite it not being original Georgian fabric, the scale, materials, and style of the current building clearly make a positive contribution to the Charlotte Street CA, and have obvious visual links to the south side of the street, which itself is original Georgian fabric. 52 Tottenham Street is listed as a 'positive contributor' in the Charlotte Street CA appraisal.

Our conclusion is therefore that the building is suitable for redevelopment but only subject to the replacement building being of an exceptional quality and of an appropriate use, and that the new building should enhance the special character of the CA and deliver sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm caused through the exceptional loss of a positive contributor. The necessity of delivering upon these objectives should be afforded great weight, given that the preservation of 52 Tottenham Street as a heritage asset should be afforded great weight and that Camden has a statutory duty under the TCPA to have special regard to the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas. The Charlotte Street management plan also states that: *'the Council will normally expect all buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area to be retained,'* while: *'any proposals for the demolition of an unlisted building would need to be fully and robustly justified.'*

The proposal to comprehensively redevelop should therefore be clear and convincing. In our opinion however the demolition is not sufficiently justified given the quality and associated public benefit of the replacement building.

The appearance of the proposed does not pay sufficient regard to the historic context of the street and wider CA. Of most concern is the large solid-to-void ratio, and total disregard for the typical horizontal separations and proportions evident in the two adjacent buildings and the terraces

across the street. While the facades of all buildings on the street are relatively 'flat', the replacement building introduces an unusual style of massing/detailing for which there is no precedent in the area. We do not consider this unusual massing to be an enhancement but more of a neutral/detracting factor to the character of the CA.

We also find no justification for the extra storeys above the accepted block height. The great intensification of use represented by the demolition of the existing and doubling in height, along with the infill to the rear should be far sufficient to make this redevelopment viable. Allowing the extra increase in height would set a precedent for this block and eventually the surrounding area, which would no doubt cause harm to the CA and the majority of listed buildings only of three to four storeys tall.

While the upper storeys would not be visible from Tottenham Street, they will be clearly visible in the surrounding area, including on the nearby well preserved mews street. This will cause harm to the character and appearance of the Charlotte Street CA and the setting of a number of listed buildings.

In conclusion, we have no objection to the redevelopment of this site in principle, but only subject to a replacement building of exceptional architectural quality, paying sufficient regard to the historic surrounding and origin of the street. In our opinion the replacement building does not exceed the required threshold and would set an unnecessary and unwelcome precedent by means of its excessive height.

Owen Ward
Hero Granger-Taylor
Anthony Jennings
Jo Hurford

CHARLOTTE STREET CAAC

Bloomsbury Conservation Areas
Advisory Committee

25th October 2020