

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
------------------------	-------------------------	------------------	-----------------	------------------

2021/0877/P	Eton CAAC	29/03/2021 11:10:45	OBJ	
-------------	-----------	---------------------	-----	--

Eton
Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Advice from Eton Conservation Area Advisory Committee: 29.03.2021

Re: : 155 & 157 Regents Park Road London NW1 8BB : 2021/0877/P

Demolition of existing building and redevelopment to provide a part 4 storey/part 7 storey building, with two basement levels, for a 59 bedroom hotel, with new street level public realm works in front (at junction of Regent's Park Road, Adelaide Road and Haverstock Hill).

The application proposes the redevelopment of the site to provide a ground plus six storey building [over a two-level basement] and a ground plus three storey building comprising a 59 bedroom hotel with associated works. Refuse and servicing the hotel will be from Adelaide Road. There are indicative proposals to improve the public realm at the front of the site.

The proposal involves the demolition of the existing ground plus three storey building on the site comprising three commercial units [A1, A3 and A5 Class Uses] at ground and lower ground floor with small office accommodation at first and second floors above and a single residential unit on the top floor.

The Eton Conservation Area lies to the north of the proposed development site. The nature and quality of the proposals for development at 155 Regent's Park Road are therefore of great interest to us as the design and use of the site impacts the entrance to the conservation area from the south and its residential character and quiet amenity.

The proposals raise a number of concerns and our comments and objections are set out below.

1. The supporting documents are misleading and show a lack of sensitivity to the functioning and appearance of the area Contrary to Camden Policy and Guidance.
The supporting documents – The D&A Statement in particular - present an inaccurate description of the site's location and designation. The application site is incorrectly identified in the supporting documents as a transitional one at the northern end of Camden High Street, adjacent to the Camden Town Centre and the 'Central Activities Zone'. Reference is also made to the 'Chalk Farm Town centre' rather than the Chalk Farm Neighbourhood Centre - a secondary centre serving the local community. (Camden's Local plan Appendix 4).

In describing the application site as part of Camden Town - a major town centre for growth of mixed use commercial activities [The Mayor's Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance, SPG (2014)] the applicant seeks to justify the 'redevelopment of the site [to provide] the opportunity to introduce all day active use'. Effectively proposing the expansion of Camden Town's night-time economy into this part of Chalk Farm and introducing 24 hour activity on the site. The potential effects of the proposal are unacceptable. The application site is located at the northern end of Chalk Farm Road and not the northern end of Camden High Street [which finishes at Camden Lock] and is not part of Camden Town Centre. The transitional nature of the site - at this junction of Chalk Farm Road with Adelaide road – is from low intensity day-time commercial/retail uses serving the local community and the predominantly residential areas to the north, east and west.

Application No: Consultees Name: Received:

Comment: Response:

There is no such designation as Chalk Farm Town Centre. The site is located on the edge of the Chalk Farm Neighbourhood centre and Camden's Local Plan makes clear that - 'late night licensed entertainment will generally be inappropriate in Neighbourhood Centres due to the impact of deliveries, noise and customers on residential amenity. Neighbourhood Centres will be considered suitable locations for food and drink uses of a small scale (generally less than 100sqm) that serve a local catchment, provided they do not harm the surrounding area.'

The proposed hotel use within the Chalk Farm Neighbourhood Centre is contrary to Council policy.

2. The proposed hotel is inappropriate, unnecessary and unsafe in this location. It will have a serious impact on the safety of the traffic junction, vehicle and pedestrian movement and access to the existing ground floor commercial units contrary to the Council's Town centre and Transport policies.

The proposed hotel will displace residential accommodation on the site and small, affordable, local business space contrary to the Council's Local Plan Policies [H3 Protecting Existing Homes and E2 Protecting small business premises]. We note that the applicant proposes to replace the business accommodation on an alternative site in Camden Town an area quite distinct and separate from the Chalk Farm community and provide two affordable homes in a neighbouring residential building. The gains proposed appear spurious.

There are a number of hotels – small and large – within walking distance of the site (on Chalk Farm Road opposite the site, Haverstock Hill, Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage) - others are proposed more appropriately at Camden Lock which forms part of Camden Town Centre. This hotel is not needed here; it will introduce night-time activity in the area which remains predominantly residential. Exceptionally in the neighbourhood, The Roundhouse – lying to the south of the site, provides a landmark venue for night-time activity. This is a popular venue raising serious crime and nuisance issues which affect the local residential community [Ref any 'Safer Neighbourhoods' meeting locally coordinated by the Police]. There is a real danger that extending night-time activity into neighbouring residential areas as proposed will exacerbate the situation and impact on their character and quiet amenity.

In addition the impact of the proposed hotel on the movement of vehicles and pedestrians on Adelaide Road is unsafe/dangerous. The Council's planning policy and guidance requires that goods vehicles should be accommodated on site in new development. The applicant proposes to introduce a 'formal loading facility' on Adelaide Road, close to the Site. This is described as a 'half-on/half-off' loading bay – effectively a 'lay-by'. It will be directly adjacent to the busy Chalk Farm Road/Adelaide road traffic junction controlled by a number of traffic lights. It will take up more than half the existing, narrow, footway; be unacceptably close to the entrances to the local business/shops on the ground floor of the adjoining residential wing of the existing building; and will be opposite and adjacent to heavily used bus- stops. It is also more than likely that vehicles travelling west along Adelaide Road would need to cross over into on-coming or standing traffic in order to get round a parked goods vehicle. It is hard to think of a worse scenario for servicing a building! See photographs below.

3. The proposed building is out of character with its surroundings and neighbouring properties on Chalk

Application No: Consultees Name: Received:

Comment:

Response:

Farm Road contrary to the Council's Design policies.

The Camden Character Study (2015) summarises the existing character of Chalk Farm Road. It refers to 'A substantial portion of the main street is lined with Victorian buildings. These are modest in both scale and detail'. The properties nearby the site on Chalk Farm Road are almost without exception four/five stories in height. The seven-storey building proposed will be a discordant note in the townscape. It will be overly dominant and will have a harmful impact on the adjoining two storey listed Underground station -and the Roundhouse, an industrial/railway building which is also much lower in height. Both buildings should remain the key landmarks in the area reflecting the character of the neighbourhood.

The Roundhouse is a rare historic building, and architecturally by far the most particular building in Chalk Farm. It already has to cope with an ill-advised office building next door to it, and Camden should now make sure that no more architectural distractions are allowed to encroach upon it – which is what this proposal will do. It will do so because, though not immediately close by, it is designed to draw attention to itself. It wants to be noticed, to stand out, and it will do that in the immediate architectural neighbourhood of the Roundhouse (see Design and Access Doc 7, CGI p59). As the 'Official Hotel Partner' of the Roundhouse it will do the latter a disservice.

'The appearance of the building' the Executive Summary says 'is developed from a deep understanding of Camden and its historic and present-day architectural character.' Why then does it so resemble the Palazzo della Civilita Italiana, the best known of Mussolini's buildings in the EUR district in Rome? Among the many things that can be said about this building one is that it is kitsch – and some of this quality hangs about this proposal.

The existing building on the site is noted as being in 'good condition' [D&A Statement]; it fits in well with its surroundings and respects the height and massing of existing neighbouring properties. Any replacement building should respect and maintain this local character.

For the reasons set out above the hotel proposal should be rejected.

Yours sincerely,
Eton CAAC
