

Dear Mr Fowler.

14 / 07 / 2021

RE : 2021/2954/P One Museum Street

Please bring this letter to the attention of Camden's Planning Committee prior to their determination of the above application.

I have run a number of the theatres in the West End and was from 1987 - 90 the Producer and Managing Director of the Theatre of Comedy at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

I object to the application submitted by LabTech and add my voice to the thirteen Associations and Societies that have, similarly, objected.

The application fails to meet the criteria of Camden's Local Plan. In particular those policies in Section D. It fails to respect the local context and character and to preserve and enhance the historic environment. It also fails to meet the standards set for « tall buildings » and it damages the two adjacent Conservation Areas (Bloomsbury and Covent Garden).

Both by its height and bulk the proposed office building is insensitive, alien and inappropriate.

The proposed 21 storey office block is 80 metres tall, 22 meters higher than the existing building. It also doubles the bulk of the existing building. It towers above and overshadows not only the immediate vicinity but also adversely effects the Protected Views both near and far of Listed Buildings. These include in the vicinity: The British Museum (Grade 1 Listed) ; St George's (Grade 1 listed) ; The Shaftesbury Theatre (Grade 2 Listed) and Bedford Square (Listed 2*). Further afield it damages the Protected Views of, amongst others, Horse Guards Parade, the North side of the Embankment, and St James Park.

The gain to the Community is derisive. The Developers propose 12 affordable homes of which only 6 will be social housing. Their proposals for « Open Space » are minimalistic ; benches and shrubs sited in Museum Street and their proposal to eliminate the existing basement car parking does not constitute a planning gain. On the contrary, with the advent of electric cars the existing car park could well be beneficial in the future.

Finally, LabTech's planning application is irrelevant. The proposal is for 251,400sq ft of office space. Post Coronavirus, it has been projected that only two fifths of Central London workers are likely to return to offices and that most people will continue to work from home. It will be a white elephant adding significantly to the existing empty office space already in Camden.

I urge the members of Camden's Planning Committee to refuse LabTech's application and to uphold their own Local Plan.

Ian Albery