

Subject: 2021/2954/P One Museum Street

Dear Camden Planning team,

Re: 2021/2954/P One Museum Street

I live in a four storey block of flats in Camden owned by Labtech. Many of the objections to the redevelopment of Selkirk House will focus on height, open space or other very relevant considerations. I wish to make you aware of what it is actually like to live in one of very few residential blocks owned by Labtech.

We have found Labtech to be a thoroughly incompetent freeholder whose actions have hugely prejudiced our lives. We feel it is important to register our objections as we are very concerned that future residents of Selkirk House, if approved, would suffer similarly. Labtech's website speaks of people, community and CSR. Our experience could not be further from the truth.

We decided to sell our flat last year and immediately became aware of issues in the market relating to the building safety scandal. To cut a long story short, our buyer's lender requested confirmation that the cladding panels on the top floor were non combustible. This is information that Labtech are required to hold on file, on site, in the O&M documents. They did not so we asked them to arrange a panel inspection.

Labtech instead wanted to obtain an EWS1 certificate. This revealed their ignorance of the situation. We had to explain to them that this was a valuation document, not a safety one, and that our valuer hadn't requested it. We also explained that it wasn't for use in low rise buildings. We had also become aware of many horror stories around the country of leaseholders being trapped in buildings because of EWS1, and costly works that were taking years to take place, in some circumstances entirely unnecessarily due to extreme risk aversion. We explained to Labtech it would be madness to proceed down this route and that it would have negative consequences for all stakeholders. We found them multiple contractors willing to do the panel inspection and spent hours and hours of our own time doing their own jobs in a desperate attempt to save our sale.

Labtech agreed to do the panel inspection with our contractor and only proceed with EWS1 if the panels were combustible. We have this in writing. When we received the report, we found out we had been lied to and a full EWS1 survey had been unnecessarily arranged behind our backs. The consequences of this for us are:

- ∞ We have lost £37,000 up front
- ∞ We are being threatened with disproportionate and unnecessary extortionate remedial fees, which may take years to carry out
- ∞ We cannot sell or remortgage our flat until the regulatory landscape changes or the remedial works are done. This will be years.

It is important to point out that we have passed all fire safety assessments in the past and never had any safety concerns.

At all times Labtech behaved without due regard to our concerns and livelihoods. They refused to meet with us or keep us in the loop. They delayed for months on end, such that Government and industry guidance changed. They refused to respond to emails or speak with us. We had to communicate through equally unresponsive managing agents. Labtech's representatives were insufficiently qualified to handle the matter or appreciate the impact it was having on our lives. For example, a Labtech employee told us that she didn't want to pursue the panel inspection option as it would take too long to get board approval (she essentially couldn't be bothered), having previously obtained it for the EWS1. They consistently displayed a major lack of understanding or interest as to the situation and the implications on leaseholders, some of whom (including ourselves) now find ourselves in a precarious financial and [REDACTED] position due to their entirely avoidable actions.

In short, we had a way through a tricky regulatory process, and rather than assisting us, Labtech torpedoed it either intentionally or negligently. We cannot work out which as the communication has been so bad. On a recent call we were lied to again as to their motives.

In addition to the above, the general management of the building has been extremely sub-standard. We have complained formally and repeatedly about our managing agents, this has been ignored. We have yet to receive reconciliations from 2018. We have been billed for other blocks and have to forensically check each document for regular, common mistakes. Broken fixtures remain unfixed and emails unresponded to.

We are therefore extremely concerned that Labtech is potentially increasing its residential holdings in Camden, especially if some residents may be vulnerable. The power that they hold as freeholders is huge. The way we have been treated is appalling and as a result our lives are now on hold and we have been subjected to immense stress and inconvenience. We feel that these are very relevant considerations and request that this information is formally taken in to account as an objection.

It's clear that Labtech are a commercial property investor first and foremost and have no interest or experience in residential leaseholders, people or community. If they want to do business in Camden, we feel they should treat the local community with dignity and respect, be held to account, and demonstrate a basic level of competence. This is simply not happening.

We would also request that our names be kept confidential, as we are concerned about the consequences of speaking out against Labtech. However, we are very happy to discuss and provide further information and evidence if so. On a separate note, if you have any suggestions as to how to resolve this so we can move forward with our lives, we would be hugely grateful for any support.

I would also be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this email.

Thanks and best wishes

[REDACTED]