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Subject: Objection to One Museum Street 2021/2954/P

Date: Thu, 05 Aug 2021 00:41:52 +0000

From: Helena Roden <[REDACTED]>

To: planning@camden.gov.uk

Cc: david.fowler@camden.gov.uk

Dear Camden Planning

Please register my objection to application 2021/2954/P One Museum Street.

Every aspect of this application has sought to over-exploit each space it deals with to the detriment of the appearance, character and experience of the local area. Thus the tower is extraordinarily high and bulky, Vine Lane will be poky and dark, the office block on West Central Street is too high and far too close to the old Fire Station, and there are inappropriate extra floors added to the New Oxford Street and Museum Street facing flats.

The Tower

The existing Selkirk House tower wins no beauty prizes but at 53 metres high it is masked at several points by the frontages along New Oxford Street. The developers have chosen to not show us how prominent their tower will be in the approach from Tottenham Court Road tube station going East. It will be an ugly backdrop to the Grade II listed James Smith umbrella shop and completely at odds with the Shaftesbury Theatre, thus spoiling all the work Camden is doing to improve the street scape around the North end of Shaftesbury Avenue. Camden should insist that the Selkirk House height is not exceeded. The surface of the tower is repetitive and boring, the little ridges with tiny trees do nothing to alleviate its sheer faces.

Sustainability

There is no justification for not using the existing structure of the tower, it is sound. Demolition and re-build are untenable in view of their contribution to climate change. Camden have produced policies to combat climate change, they should implement them. LabTech claim that the floor to ceiling heights between floors of Selkirk House are too low to be suitable for modern offices, the answer to this is simple - don't create offices. Why not revert to hotel use? Or housing? Both are more needed than yet more offices.

Housing

The calculation of the housing requirement is impossible until Camden and LabTech resolve the issue of the residential units in Selkirk House. What a farce! The proposed flats on the New Oxford St / Museum St / West Central St block will be so close to and overshadowed by the tower, the living conditions will always be uncomfortable. The designation of the internal space between the blocks as a supposed play and relaxation space is mean, overlooked, noisy and dark. Surely children and families should not be subjected to these conditions?

Vine Lane

Why has so much design time and energy been expended on such an unnecessary element? On a North / South axis, with such high walls on each side, the sun will be unable to penetrate this space making it very unattractive for cafes or shoppers. I understand that the GLA favours 'permeability' but once Vine Lane meets High Holborn there is no corresponding lane on the far side and crossing the three lane road at this point is dangerous and pointless. The area has had a drugs market for at least the last 20 years, Vine Lane is the sort of space drug dealers will readily exploit. We have the example of Dunn's Passage if we want to experience what Vine Lane might be like; a bin store environment that does not feel public. Pocket Park should be banned as a term, the one proposed for Vine Lane is barely the size of a shrub let alone a park.

Design Review Panel

If Camden planners had listened to the first design review panel and insisted that LabTech scale back their monstrous ambitions, local community groups (all unpaid volunteers) wouldn't have to spend their time and energy pointing out the obvious; that this is an ill-conceived scheme that should never have been allowed to get to planning application stage.

Best wishes
Helena Roden

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