

Mohammed Ahmed

From: Polly Beard [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 August 2021 22:45
To: Planning Planning
Subject: URGENT: Objection to Planning Application Number 2021/2911/p - 24 Lady Margaret Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

To whom it may concern

My neighbours have informed me of the proposed development at 24 Lady Margaret Road and the many issues and concerns that this would cause. I've reviewed the Planning Application Number 2021/2911/p and would like to join my neighbours and strongly object to the proposal on the following grounds:

Ethics of Provision Proposed

– The proposal to change 24 Lady Margaret road from an HMO (hosting exchange students) to a children's home - which I understand will typically be hosting 14-18 year old teenagers that are deemed too acute to be hosted in a fostering environment, does not take the complex needs of these young people properly into consideration. I have been informed that these young people have often suffered severe neglect from their parents, sexual abuse and have a history of gang affiliation/county lines and that most councils place these children out of county, in rural settings in small homes which generally allows them a certain degree of separation from their past lives and a better path to recovery. I feel that placing these young people in a built-up residential area in the heart of Camden will not be in the best interests of these children who deserve space, therapeutic facilities and distance away from drug dealers, gangs looking to recruit, and groomers seeking out vulnerable children.

– The care provision appears wholly unsuitable. There is a lack of therapeutic areas and facilities in the plans, and there are only two part time staff proposed. This can in no way be enough resource to care for a group of young people. Two part-time staff would suggest that the young people would be largely unsupervised. Further, it is my understanding that the property owners are not experienced children's home operators and have no valid expertise in this area. It is my understanding that the owner/operator isn't a recognised specialist with Ofsted track record.

– The plans submitted suggest seven bedrooms. (However, the plans do not specify how many people would be sharing bedrooms.) I feel that this accommodation would be too over-cramped in order to provide care for young people with complex needs. The plans propose erecting a separate building in the back garden which shows that the accommodation is not fit for housing a large group of children and staff. Further, if a building were to be erected this would further reduce the outdoor space. I would assume that outdoor garden space would be a fundamental necessity for children and therefore further illustrates the unsuitability of the property for this proposal.

Community

– I am deeply concerned that there has been no consultation with the local community about this proposed application. It is also extremely worrying that the application has been put through at the height of the summer holidays - with the deadline for comments falling on the August Bank Holiday weekend. This has meant that many local inhabitants away on the school holidays have not been made aware of the planning proposal, and have therefore not afforded the right to voice their concerns or their objections. I would urge the council to review these deadlines and to engage with the local community on this matter as soon as

possible. Members of the local community have reached out to the council for further information and clarity, however I hear that this information has not been forthcoming.

– I do not think that the suitability of the area has been properly assessed. This neighbourhood is by and large populated with families with young children and is therefore not at all suitable for a local entrepreneur-led acute children's institution that requires professional and pastoral care for young people that have gone through extremely severe trauma and that can represent a threat to themselves and to others in the community. These homes have attracted swathes of trouble to the neighbours through drug use, noise, late night police calls and petty crime and general disruption to the community. While I do appreciate there is an acute need for these homes across the UK, I think that these young people would be better served in homes outside of city centre settings.

– We are concerned that this ill-thought-out proposal will lead to significant disruption to the area. I understand that there was a children's home, similar to that which is being proposed on Falkland road. From local neighbours, I have been informed that it became a focus for drug dealing, noise and antisocial behaviour. This previous experience would clearly suggest that this is not a suitable area for another such operation.

– There is a large number of elderly people in the neighbourhood, often living alone and walking the streets alone to do their shopping etc., and they may therefore feel vulnerable to groups of youngsters that they do not know (who would be in contrast with most of their familiar neighbours who are usually known to them and would help them if needed). Having spoken to my older neighbours I know that people find clusters of large teenagers quite frightening in themselves.

Conservation Area

– The application proposes erecting a separate building in the back garden. The design of the development is not at all in keeping with the conservation area and poses a significant harm to the traditional character of the area.

– This proposed building does not respect local context and character, nor does it preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets, nor will it integrate well with the surround streets as required in the Camden Local Plan Policy D1. It would be detrimental to the street scene.

– Further, no properties on this street have buildings in their back gardens, which is also totally incongruous with the character of the road and sets a worrying precedent.

– Erection of this separate building would require felling at least one healthy tree - a holly tree in the garden. This has not been included in the plans. These plans also reduce existing garden space which we know is valuable for wildlife, the environment and wellbeing.

Effect of Design and Size

– Due to the proposed development's bulk and prominence it would cause an overdevelopment of the site. The scale, massing and height of the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the neighbouring properties. The large full height windows will look directly into several living areas and gardens of nearby properties, with a negative effect on their privacy.

– The proposed excavation for the foundations of the building may pose a risk to the foundations of neighbouring properties. There is also a concern that the disturbance of ground during the building process could lead to potential subsidence of nearby buildings. This is an area which is already at risk of subsidence and 'shrink-swell clay hazard'.

Impact of Vehicles

– I am informed that an operation of this kind will require permanent parking for four to six cars (for staff, management and visitors). The proposed development will add a strain on parking provisions. Parking spaces are already limited in this area. I am also concerned that this requirement has not been properly included in the application.

Omissions and Errors

– I am troubled that there is scant information overall in the application - for a proposal of this magnitude, for example number of children/beds, provision of care and therapeutic facilities, OFCOM registration etc.

– The proposed building has a toilet planned. This in essence makes the building a dwelling. It is not confirmed what exactly this building will be used for, and whether this will be another bedroom, a completely separate living accommodation or staff quarters/room used by numerous people. I am concerned that these important planning details have not been included in the application.

– I think there are a number of inaccuracies in the application. I am concerned that the application has not been completed with due care and attention. I believe these errors are:

- ∞ The application states that the proposal will not result in the loss of residential garden land. This is incorrect as the proposal is to erect a building in the garden.
- ∞ The application states that no new water connections are required. This is incorrect as the building in the garden will have a toilet and therefore require a water connection.
- ∞ The application states that this proposal does not involve the loss of student accommodation. This is incorrect as the accommodation currently houses students.
- ∞ The application form states that foul sewage will be disposed of via the mains sewers - but that it will not be connected to the existing drainage system. I don't think both these facts can be true.

I sincerely hope you will take all of the above points into consideration and that planning application is refused.

Your sincerely,
Polly Beard