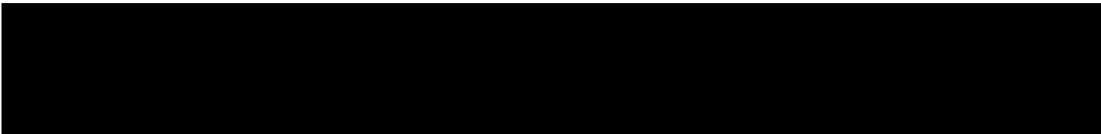




**Subject:** objection to planning application 2021/3839/P



Re Planning application 2021/3839/P

Dear Ms Henry,

I wish to object in the strongest possible terms against the proposed addition of a floor to Howitt Close. I am a leaseholder in the building since more than ten years. As many of my fellow-leaseholders, the unique characteristics of this art déco building have played a significant role in deciding to move into this building and to purchase a flat in it.

Like the vast majority (if not all) leaseholders and tenants in the building, I am convinced that the proposed construction will have a) a hugely negative impact on the wellbeing of its residence, b) on this part of Belsize Park as a protected Conservation Area, but also c) on the everyday lives of ourselves and our neighbours. In my view, there is not the shadow of a doubt that Camden Council has to refuse this planning application.

a) Negative impact on the residents of Howitt Close: With 46 flats, the building is already very densely populated. Already now, there is not enough space to manage the waste of these flats. Already now, deliveries, visitors and people involved in small works in one of the many flats create a constant flow of

people in the building. The proposed 7 new flats with realistically 10 to 15 new residents will considerably reduce the quality of life in the building.

The Construction Management Plan, added only today (27 October 2021) to the planning application, demonstrates that this application can only be implemented by destroying our front garden with a two-storey 'welfare cabin' (p.42). I assume that the developer, who has shown an appalling lack of consideration for the wellbeing of the residents of Howitt Close by not undertaking any form of consultation, considers this irrelevant collateral damage – for us residents, it is a major infringement on our wellbeing. The proposed planning application does not only very significantly and negatively impacts on our wellbeing during the proposed construction. It will also reduce the value of our properties by creating a cramped and overburdened building.

b) The proposed addition of a roof destroys the uniquely elegant appearance of Howitt Close by adding a heavy, overwhelming and dominating feature to a finely balanced and beautiful neighbourhood. It will negatively impact on the appearance of Howitt Road, Glenilla Road, and Belsize Park Gardens. More qualified objectors (the Conservation Area Advisory Committee) have already stated that the intentionally misleading statements by the developer about creating a building more in synch with the neighbourhood is an attempt to sugarcoat a blatant attack on a built environment which is unique and which Camden Council is \*obliged\* to protect by rejecting the planning application. The attempt to put lipstick on a pig's snout by claiming that the added floor would positively contribute to the neighbourhood is a travesty, and cannot obscure the only objective of this planning application of making a profit.

c) Beyond the negative consequences for life in Howitt Close itself, also the neighbourhood will be negatively impacted: The added floor will reduce the privacy of a very significant number of houses and flats in the immediate vicinity of the building. It will take away light from a large number of neighbours and thus reduce their wellbeing, but also the value of their properties. This part of Belsize Park is already a very densely populated neighbourhood. Adding seven flats will add traffic, noise, and problems to parking (even if indeed the leases for the new flats should, as they need to, include a clause preventing the new residents from acquiring parking permits). Also, it is very likely that construction works will not be possible without destroying the grown environment: especially the hedges and trees of the front garden.

Yours sincerely

François Guesnet

François Guesnet  
Professor of Modern Jewish History  
Departmental Graduate Tutor  
Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, UCL Gower Street London WC1E 6BT

Chairman, [Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies](#); Executive Committee, [European Association for Jewish Studies](#)

Article '[Juden](#)' for the online dictionary on Eastern Central Europe (in German)  
Proud co-editor of NEW vol. 33 of *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*: [Jewish Religious Life in Poland since 1750](#)  
[Kristallnacht](#) - Pogrom - Terror: A terminological reflection (2019, with U. Baumann)  
Proud to be part of [Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 7](#)