



6<sup>th</sup> November 2021

2021/3673/P

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**Objection to 2021/3673/P regarding infill extension and rooftop plant at 85 Gray's Inn Road.**

Having considered this application the decision of the Bloomsbury CAAC is to object to the proposals.

The site is located on Gray's Inn Road but wraps around a street block to present frontages onto Roger Street and Brownlow Mews. While Gray's Inn Road has a generally larger scale and commercial character, both Roger Street and Brownlow Mews are of a more domestic character and appearance.

Gray's Inn Road itself also has a partially domestic character with a number of surviving Georgian terraces and mansion blocks along its length, with commercial uses typically at ground floor in these buildings. This can clearly be seen at neighbouring 75-81 Gray's Inn Road and Churston Mansions opposite. The overall scale of Gray's Inn Road however is much greater than that of neighbouring streets.

The development site itself is of an inappropriate scale and design and detracts from the conservation area. The elevation onto Gray's Inn Road is particularly incongruous and at ground floor the dark and dead frontage contrasts with the character of this busy commercial street. The elevations onto Roger Street and Brownlow Mews are similarly massive and clumsy in their detailing and design.

Turning to the application itself, the alterations at roof level are fairly typical for a building of this scale and use. The plant is set back from the street and appropriately screened to reduce impact upon visual amenity. The roof terrace is similarly not easily visible from the public realm and is considered appropriate in its context. No overlooking issues related to heritage assets are considered to arise.

The large chimney however is unusual and should be resisted without robust justification.

The infill extension is not considered to be appropriate in both principle and design. Despite its evident design flaws, the existing development has been built up upon the plots of pre-existing development leaving a small 'lightwell' space which would previously have been a garden. This helps to reduce the sense of enclosure of Georgian properties on Gray's Inn Road and the mews properties on Brownlow Mews. The elevation onto the lightwell, despite having little design merit, is at least of typical appearance with regular fenestration punctuating a brick wall.

The proposed infill would simply introduce a sheer metallic wall to a height of six storeys directly abutting the land of adjoining occupiers. Regardless of design, this would have a severe impact upon

levels of light and sense of enclosure to a number of neighbouring residential properties on Gray's Inn Road and Brownlow Mews. This scale of development is considered wholly inappropriate within the sensitive setting of the affected mews properties and Georgian terraces. The orientation of the development (lying to the south) and small scale of mews properties further exacerbate this problem.

In terms of design, the use of vertical standing seam aluminium to cover the entire elevation of a six storey structure is considered completely inappropriate, and consequently detrimental to the character of the conservation area.

In our view, some limited infilling of the lightwell area could be considered appropriate and indeed beneficial to optimising the use of the land, but building to the level of the roof is unacceptable in principle.

We therefore object to this application.

**Bloomsbury Conservation Areas**  
*Advisory Committee*