



FAO Kate Henry

Camden Council

Planning Applications

By email and Royal Mail

London, 14 November 2021

Dear Kate,

Planning application number 2021/38339/P: Howitt Close mansard roof extension to create 7 flats.

I am writing to you following up on the small yellow sign that appeared on the lamp post in October and on the legal notice that I finally received on 28 October 2021 from Freeths LLP instructed by **Dajan Properties Limited**.

As a Howitt Close long leaseholder and resident since 1997, **I strongly object to the Planning Application to extend the roof of Howitt Close** for the following reasons

1. Design
 2. Amenity
 3. Traffic Management & Environmental Impact
 4. Land Use – Affordable Housing Contribution
 5. Compliance to Planning Application and other Procedures
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1. DESIGN

Howitt Close is situated in the **Belsize Conservation Area (CA)**.

The **Belsize Conservation Statement** (published by Camden Council in April 2003) clearly lists Howitt Close as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Page 41 of the Belsize Conservation Statement says that 'roof extensions which change the shape and form of the roof can have a harmful impact on the CA and are unlikely to be acceptable where it would be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building (...) and where the roof is prominent, particularly in long views.

It is preposterous for the Landlord's architects (Bubble) to allege that the absence of a pitched or mansard roof would provide an "almost unfinished appearance" to the existing Howitt Close (HC) building in order to justify their proposal to add a mansard roof, because

- Howitt Close is an **Art Deco building** and not an unfinished Edwardian building. Art Deco buildings are well documented to have flat roofs rather than mansard roofs.
- The **sub-area Glenloch** is deemed worth preserving with its pre-existing variety of architectural building styles, from Edwardian to Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. Hence, there is no need to improve on the look and design of an Art Deco building by adding a mock Edwardian mansard roof to Howitt Close, because the objective of the Conservation Area is to preserve the various styles present rather than retroactively uniform them back to the Edwardian style.

With regards to building size and mass, "the proposed Howitt Close roof extension must be primarily considered within the context of the rather small Howitt Road buildings rather than from the perspective of the larger Belsize Park Gardens houses". This point is clearly stated in the Senior Planning Officer's letter to Freeth LLP dated 12 May 2021.

The proposed mansard roof would be a total eyesore and prominently stand out in the long view walking from Haverstock Hill down Howitt Road.

Why would Camden Council authorise such a clumsy 'mock Edwardian' mansard extension that interferes with the positive contribution that Howitt Close makes to the CA and neither 'preserves' nor 'enhances its established character and appearance, instead it is overly prominent and detrimental to the form and character of the existing building?

2. AMENITY

Right to Quiet Enjoyment of our homes

- The **draft CMP totally fails to address its stated objective** to 'construct a new storey with minimal disturbance to the amenity of the occupiers of the existing flats at Howitt Close and immediately neighbouring properties.
How could anybody possibly think that the impact of the following disruptive factors can be minimised or made acceptable to residents: please note this list is not exhaustive.
 - i. A large mobile crane that goes up to 30m height and needs to be transported by 16.5m articulated lorry. In my 24 years as HC resident, I do not recall such a monstrosity being erected in the Belsize Conservation Area.
 - ii. General noise and constant impact noise (which has not been assessed yet)
 - iii. Vibrations and potential cracking in walls, ceilings and party walls. (There are already cracks in my ceiling and walls that I would expect to widen in case of construction works).
 - iv. Repeated suspension or temporary disconnection of utility services including cold water supply, electricity etc.
Please note that the CMP makes no reference to the fact that there are services on the roof that supply the entire building and without which HC cannot function. The disruption of rerouting those services would be enormous.
 - v. Side huts, skips and tradespeople's facilities situated on residents parking bays as well as in HC communal garden areas (NB: just in front of my bedroom window!)
 - vi. Loss of privacy and long-term security risk through scaffolding. The latter is likely to invalidate my [REDACTED] insurance.
 - vii. Etc.
- **Hours of operations:** 8am to 4pm on week days and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays is not restrictive enough in terms of nuisance, noise, dust, fumes & bad smell, reduced natural light caused by construction activities.

The pandemic has significantly and permanently changed how we all work and how we use our homes: many people like me, now predominantly work from home, so it cannot be assumed that during the day, most homes would be empty and hence construction work would not severely affect people's ability to earn their livelihoods.

This means that I will be disturbed throughout all my working hours and only be able to enjoy a longer restorative sleep on Sunday mornings!

Sunlight/Daylight impact

- **During Construction period:**

As I live on the Ground Floor (corner Glenilla Road with Howitt Close) I will be affected severely throughout the construction of this monstrosity by skips, scaffolding, building materials being placed outside my north and northwest facing windows which already bring limited sunlight into my flat.

- **After completion:**

I suppose that the families residing at the nearby Howitt Road houses would have good reasons to complain about the significant obstruction of view and impact on daylight that the increased mass and height the proposed Howitt close mansard extension would entail.

Based on impact on daylighting standards, this renewed proposal to build an additional floor to Howitt Close should be rejected exactly in the same way it was rejected on 29 September 1961.

Plenty of things might have changed in the last sixty years - Council regulations, pollution and climate to name a few - but the earth is still rotating along the same axis and around the sun in the same way; hence London's hours of daylight across the years are unchanged.

How would Camden Council justify depriving residents at HC and neighbouring properties of the rights to enjoy their own homes, to earn a living by peacefully working in a safe, quiet, naturally lit and relatively unpolluted environment?

3. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT & ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT

The streets around HC are very narrow. Even the weekly rubbish collection vehicles are struggling to get around and get through this residential area.

Since the pandemic there has been a significant increase of delivery vans (from Amazon to Supermarket delivery vehicles) causing nuisance and pollution in the area.

Furthermore, it is very noticeable how even the smaller residential developments such as single house roof or basement extensions have been very problematic.

Last but not least, we have just suffered the inconvenience of residents parking bays being suspended for protracted periods due to the recent installation of fibre optic broadband cables.

How is Camden Council planning to manage traffic congestion and pollution that this Application will inevitably cause to the area? How could this possibly be consistent to the Council's policy of Clean Air and Less Emissions?

4. LAND USE – AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTION

The mansard roof extension, by Camden Council's own admission, will not make any significant improvement to the priority of creating affordable housing.

Why would Camden Council allow such harm to be done to the CA and to the Leaseholders' and Residents' Right to a Quiet Enjoyment of their home if this project doesn't bring any significant public benefit? Is it because the Council would receive a handy £159,344.50 cash injection (as per Senior Planning Officer's letter dated 7 December 2021) from the Applicant Dajan Properties Ltd. in the form of the 'affordable housing contribution'?

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5. PLANNING APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The planning application submitted by Dajan Properties via Freeth LLP has already been **fraught with procedural errors, inconsistencies and inaccuracies** that do not forebode well for a safe and compliant implementation of any planning & construction proposal that the Council would authorise for the Applicant in question.

Just to name a few key planning procedural issues:

- i. The Applicant blatantly ignored and disregarded the Senior Planner's **strong advice 'to consult with the building's existing leaseholders throughout the process'** (letter dated 12 May 2020) and 'to consult with existing occupants and involve them in the process' (letter dated 7 December 2020).
- ii. The Construction Management Plan CMP was not duly included by the Applicant in its official Planning Application dated 27 July 2021 (as per point 39. Declaration) and published online.
- iii. Under the Town and Country Planning Order 2015, it is incumbent on the Applicant to serve a formal notice of the planning application to any leaseholders of not less than 7 years. It is shameful that Dajan Properties only remembered this obligation when expressly reminded about it, and sent out a **formal notice to us leaseholders dated 27 October 2021 which is 4 days after the unlawfully notified Planning Consultation period was expected to close.**
- iv. A **neighbourhood consultation process was not undertaken prior to submission of the CPM first draft**, as prescribed by Camden regulations.
- v. Etc.

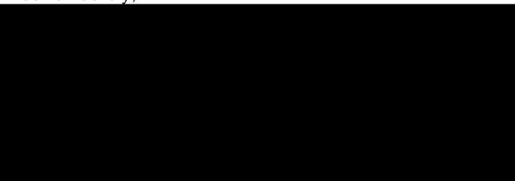
I would like to point out that we, the HC residents, have already had to endure decades of blatant neglect of the HC building and sustained disregard of HC residents' concerns and rights by the Applicant, Dajan Properties LTD while they (the Landlord) were managing the building. That's exactly why we, the residents, took back the ***Right To Manage*** of Howitt Close.

In light of procedural issues and past experiences with the Applicant, how could Camden Council possibly believe and trust that Dajan Properties Ltd. would actually implement a roof extension in a lawfully compliant, safe and respectful manner? A leopard never changes its spots.

In conclusion, Camden Council is (or at least should be) the guardian of the Belsize Conservation area, the guarantor of local public services and the enforcer of local laws and regulations deemed to protect the health, safety and peaceful life of its residents and council tax payers.

That's why **Camden Council should (and hopefully will) uphold my and the other HC residents' complaints and reject outright the Application for the roof extension of Howitt Close.**

Your sincerely,



Lorenza Anna Cavalli

cc. Steve Adams (Conservative), Tom Simon (Liberal Democrats)