



**BLOOMSBURY
CONSERVATION AREAS**
Advisory Committee | Est. 1968

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2021/4826/P

Obote Hope
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

Objection to 2021/4826/P change of use and associated facade treatment at 1 - 6 Speedy Place, WC1H 8BU.

This objection is submitted on behalf of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee. We object to the application on the grounds of causing unacceptable harm to the significance of the conservation area.

The site is located on Speedy Place and is the only building on the street. Access to the site is through Cromer Street, with the entrance to the street between The Boot Pub and 120 Cromer Street. The site is sandwiched between the residential buildings of Tonbridge House on Tonbridge Street and Jessel Houses on Judd Street, both buildings being listed as positive contributors to the CA in the Bloomsbury CA appraisal. Speedy Place lies within Sub Area 13 of the Bloomsbury CA which is predominately domestic in character.

The existing building is of poor quality and adds little to the Conservation Area. It is not clear when the building was constructed, but the use of steel framed windows suggests early 20th Century. Unfortunately, the rather simple brick façade has been negatively affected by consequential work, leading to this previously unobjectionable building a less than positive feature.

Turning to the proposal itself, we have no comment on the change of the use to residential in principle, but we do take exception to the extraordinary density as proposed. The Camden Local Plan states in Policy D1 Design, that the Council will require that development *'provides a high standard of accommodation'*, the proposal goes against this policy.

Mews style streets such as Speedy Place benefit from the ability of being either commercial or residential, with the more vibrant examples in the Bloomsbury CA being an eclectic mix of both use classes. We believe that this building suffers from poor maintenance leading to the applicants view that a commercial use is less viable which, therefore, necessitates a change to residential.

The proposed facade treatment is particularly inept and makes no effort to respond to the Bloomsbury CA. Policy D2 Heritage of the Camden Local Plan that *'The Council will require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area'*. Additionally, both the Camden Local Plan and the NPPF express that *'The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.'* The proposed façade treatment is clearly inappropriate and will harm the character of the Bloomsbury CA. There is no public benefit from this application, and it should be refused.

The NPPF states in paragraph 194 that *'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected'*. The applicant has failed to do this.

We believe that a change of use to residential should only be granted if the applicant provides high quality accommodation that makes a positive contribution to the Bloomsbury CA. This proposal achieves nothing beyond possible short-term profit, the façade treatment only further exacerbates the shambolic nature of the building and makes no attempt to fit in with its surroundings.

We are particularly concerned with the proposed balconies which will overlook the private gardens of Tonbridge House. It is completely inappropriate to have balconies on the site given its sensitive residential nature.

We therefore object to this application, and strongly urge the council to reject the proposal for the aforementioned reasons.

Bloomsbury Conservation Areas
Advisory committee

