

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:
2021/5104/P	Stephen Castle, Sheila Castle, Daniel Castle & Holly Castle	14/12/2021 11:38:36	OBJ

Response:
To whom it may concern.

Our names are Steve, Sheila, Daniel and Holly Castle [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We would like to formally object to this planning application.

Ventana Court is a development of 5 dwellings (Nos. 1 to 5), and a community of 5 different Owners. In addition to the dwellings there are some shared communal areas, namely the Entrance Passageway and the Courtyard at the front of the main buildings. This proposal benefits one owner whilst adversely impacting the remaining four owners. [REDACTED] all of the other owners (other than the applicant) also object to this application and will each be formally objecting in their own right.

Our contention is that the proposed works adversely impact the other dwellings in Ventana Court and impair the Communal areas belonging to all the owners. In addition the increase in mass and elevations is disproportionate and goes against the principles of the original planning permission that was granted for the original development in 1998. There are a very small number of these traditional courtyard arrangements in Endell Street (and the wider Covent Garden area), and they need to be preserved in their current form as they contribute to the overall character of the Seven Dials area. They are also a key feature of the Covent Garden Conservation area.

The new additional floor and indeed the raised roof terrace will greatly impact the privacy and light quality for many neighbours on all sides of the development. Furthermore, the Ventana Court Courtyard (where most of the windows (Northeast facing), of the Ventana Court dwellings look out onto) is already significantly shielded from direct sunlight for most of the day by the existing buildings. Blocking any more light by further raising elevations will reduce the light getting into the dwellings and will also impair the whole look and feel of the Courtyard (and overall development). It will also adversely impact the living conditions of Ventana Courts central feature tree and the shrubs planted in the Courtyard.

Ventana Court was completed, and the first leases granted in 2001. So it is about 20 years old. It was developed by Berkeley Homes and replaced an old timberyard (Latchfords Yard) that had been in existence for over 100 years.

The design presented (and no doubt discussed at length with the planning authorities at the time) had to consider the heritage and character of the site and that it was in the Covent Garden Conservation Area.

The original development planning application (Application number: PS9804332, Case File: P14/24/24) was approved on 5 August 1998. The associated Officers Committee Report by John Davies (date stamped 18th June 1998), specifically looked at the following areas:

Section 6.7 - Height, bulk, and design issues (Extract):

'The bulk and height of the scheme have not been changed in any way and have been strongly influenced by the former presence of the timber storage structures on the site'

Section 6.8 - Height, bulk, and design issues (Extract):

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{The scheme varies in height from two storeys at the Shorts Gardens end to four storeys at the other end where it adjoins the tall rear elevation of 68a Neal Street. The height, bulk and massing respect the character and scale of the adjoining townscape and are appropriate for this backland location}.

Section 6.12 - Windows and Light (Extract):

{The nature of the site in terms of its location, shape and proximity to surrounding uses imposes particular constraints on the design of a scheme for the site...With the exception of two units at the western end of the site which have South facing windows, all the units have Northeast facing windows and therefore would only receive sunshine in the early part of the morning}.

The original Officers Committee Report therefore recognised the specific character of the area and that the height of the development needed to be tapered down from North to South to preserve appropriateness, character, and in particular light conditions.

In conclusion our contention is that this current proposal, if it had been part of the original planning application, would not have been approved and should not be approved now.

We will now move onto the specific objections that we have as the owners of Flat 3.

Our Flat is on the Ground and first floor of the building where Flat 5 is located.

Flat 5 is on the third and fourth floors.

Our flat is therefore immediately below Flat 5, with the Flat 5 Entrance and lift shaft on the left.

Our two bedrooms are on the first floor and so are directly impacted by noise from the flat above. Our Master bedroom currently has the Flat 5 roof terrace immediately above, whilst the second bedroom has a dwelling room above it.

Noise does travel down to us quite badly from above, however currently when we go to bed the roof terrace is rarely, if ever, in use and so we can normally enjoy a quiet night.

If the current proposal, to construct a living room above our Master bedroom, was approved then we could expect to have a much more noisy experience in the late evening and during the night as the new Living room can be expected to be used as a primary living space. This is neither acceptable nor desirable.

Secondly our flat has a back garden, it is very narrow (10 feet wide) and is surrounded on most sides by very high buildings, at circa three to four stories high. It is very hard to grow anything as the light quality is quite poor. The one place where we have a slightly lower obstructing walls is in the Easterly corner. At this place (where the existing roof terrace of Flat 5 is), the walls are lower and some welcome light gets into our shady garden. If the elevations on Flat 5 are increased by another floor that means that even less light will get into our garden.

Finally I would like to point out that Latchfords Yard Limited is the ultimate Landlord of Ventana Court and the owners of the five leasehold dwellings are all members, (i.e. effectively equal shareholders).

My understanding is that Latchfords Yard, the Company, (not the leaseholders) owns all of the common areas, exterior walls, structural elements, and roofs of the Ventana Court development.

The current planning application assumes that certain parts of Landlord owned property will be demolished (i.e. part of the roof & walls, etc.), and that new structures will be built upon Landlord owned structures (i.e.

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				<p>onto the structural walls). In my opinion, given the objection of four out of the five Latchfords Yard members to this application it is highly unlikely to be supported by the ultimate Landlord, Latchfords Yard Limited.</p> <p>Finally, as of 14th December no hard copy notifications of the planning application appear to have yet been posted out to interested parties in the neighbourhood. Until this has occurred the consultation period and indeed the final closing date for Comments from interested parties should not be finalised. Also given the intervening Christmas period and Covid impacts we would request that the deadline for Comments be extended well into January.</p>
