

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2021/5377/P	Caroline Reed	31/12/2021 17:58:57	COMMNT	<p>My husband and I are long leaseholders of a property at the lower level of Spedan Close (formerly Branch Hill Estate) with level access for his wheelchair to the estate's Heysham Lane carpark. Easy, uninterrupted access for taxis and emergency vehicles to that carpark is vital to us. For exercise he regularly walks the perimeter of the estate and the former care home site with a walking frame. This is important to our mental and physical well-being.</p> <p>My comments on the current application and the development:</p> <p>DESIGN</p> <p>The heavyweight historicist pastiche style of the approved proposed design for the commercial development of this important Hampstead site is a great disappointment. I had hoped for a rather braver and airier slice of 21st century modernism giving residents the light, generous external space and possibilities for ventilation that the last two years have demonstrated we all need.</p> <p>Much could have been learned from Benson and Forsyth's adjacent, iconic, Grade II Listed 1970s Spedan Close estate (formerly Branch Hill Estate).</p> <p>Instead, the application documents make very scant mention of the Spedan Close estate and of the negative impact that the commercial development has the potential to make for the estate and its residents both during the building phase and after completion.</p> <p>Nowhere, for example, is it noted that - because of their structural rigidity - concrete buildings can be at particular risk from ground movement and vibration damage - even 'hairline cracks'.</p> <p>BASEMENT – WATER – GROUND INVESTIGATION</p> <p>Water and sewerage</p> <p>Re Ridge and partners' BASEMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT dated 22-02-2020 with amendments dated 03-12-2021</p> <p>Section 4.3 -SURFACE WATER AND FLOODING</p> <p>Although this does acknowledge that 'the site impermeable area will increase as part of the proposed development', it also states that 'the proposed building is on same footprint as old building' - without mentioning that a sizeable portion of the existing building being replaced is suspended on piloti. Surely this must make a difference? As will any hardening of the current broken down and extremely permeable surface of the path/roadway that runs beside the building between it and the neighbouring allotments.</p> <p>Also the updating of the document appears to make no mention of the increasing surface water flood risk from extreme weather conditions due to global warming which is now generally recognised and was demonstrated in summer 2021 in Hampstead – including the short term flooding of a portion of Heysham Lane</p> <p>This adds to my concern about the 'moderate' risk of sewer flooding anticipated in the Ridge report Section 6.2. ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT. The report goes on to claim 'To mitigate, as much as reasonably practicable, the risk of sewer flooding, the proposed discharge from the site will be less than that of the existing. A 50% betterment of surface water will be achieved, reducing the discharge into the existing combined sewer network'.</p> <p>Living at the bottom of the Spedan Close estate with a ground floor level bathroom I have already noticed the</p>

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bubbling up of water in the lavatory pan during exceptionally heavy rainstorms. As well as concerns re surface water, I cannot see how a new development of 30 flats some housing up to 6 people can possibly discharge less into the sewers than the present arrangement.

Ground investigation

In the light of historical and current problems on two closely adjacent sites, the summary conclusions given in Ridge's report on their ground investigation might seem similarly optimistic.

Were Ridge and Partners made aware of the major difficulties and unanticipated costs incurred during the 1970s construction of the Spedan Close Estate – built as it is on '40 feet of landfill from the Tube extension'? That required 12.2m piles – a contributory factor in making this possibly the most expensive social housing ever built. (see the relevant chapter in Mark Swenarton's 'Cook's Camden', Lund Humphries 2017). I am surprised to see that none of Ridge's boreholes were sited at the corner of the site closest to the Spedan Close estate.

Also, when revising the report this year, were Ridge made aware of the soil contamination recently found on the directly adjacent allotment site? This is currently being dug up in an attempt to eliminate contaminants.

Any prolonging of the construction schedule, unanticipated deep pile driving or disturbance of contaminated soil clearly has to be of great concern to Spedan Close residents.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

It is essential to the comfort and well-being of Spedan Close estate residents that they retain safe and easy access to the two main pedestrian routes towards Hampstead village and tube station that run through the current Spedan Close entrance gate onto Branch Hill / Frogna Rise.

One of these is along Spedan Close itself including the section that acts as a driveway to the former care home. Camden Council's Decision Letter 11-08-2021 notes that 'Officers consider that a public right of way exists along Spedan Close and that should this route be closed off then a Stopping-Up Order would be required'. Great care should be taken in giving any permission for each temporary closure and no permanent closure should be permitted.

The other pedestrian route, which is the more direct for most residents, is via steps leading up from the residents' parking bay section of Spedan Close to the unmade up combined roadway and footpath that leads between the current 1960s extension to the care home and the neighbouring allotments up to the entrance gate. Allotment holders also make use of this roadway/footpath to access a side gate to the allotment site.

It is vital to us that access to this route is not compromised by the new development. As the roadway is intended to give access to the new basement garage and cycle park – and presumably for waste collection and/or delivery vehicles – provision including adequate lighting must be made for pedestrian safety both during the construction phase and permanently afterwards. Any suspension of pedestrian access during building works must be kept to an absolute minimum.

CONSULTATION / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION:

We received one letter in September 2018 from the then owners Kanda Consulting making promises about

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consultation and information sharing. None of these were fulfilled.

It does not bode well for Spedan Close residents that, as far as I am aware, to date Almax Group have made no attempt to inform or consult with us about their new development and the undoubted impact which it will have on the quality of our lives both during and post construction. For long leaseholders like ourselves, there will also be a likely impact on the value and saleability of our properties – especially during the construction phase.

It should be a condition of any future planning permission decisions that the developers undertake to set up timely and effective information and consultation channels with Spedan Close residents.

Information communication should include regular updates on the planned building schedule – including timings for noisy, dirty and disruptive work as well as any road or pathway closures. We should be told of any unexpected changes to the schedule or to the extent and nature of works being undertaken.

We should be given a named contact with telephone and email address and, during the building phase, and an emergency contact for reporting any issues arising outside normal working hours.
