



Subject: Registering an Objection to Planning Application 2022/1496/L, 30 Leighton Road, NW5 2QE

Importance: High

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS MOST RECENT VERSION OF MY TEXT AT 10.56

Dear Nick Baxter and Camden Planning,

I am the Ward Councillor for Kentish Town South, in which the former Postmen's Sorting Office is located. I have been alerted to the planning application by neighbours who live adjacent to the building and by the distinguished historian, Dr Gillian Tindall, who lives almost opposite. Dr Tindall, who has lived in the road for almost 60 years, is the author of *The Fields Beneath: The History of One London Village* (1997, 2011) on Kentish Town, and is clearly an expert on the locality. In her email of objection to the planning application of 29.6.22, Dr Tindall reminds us that, 'the building in front of which the new owners apparently wish to place two illuminated signs, one projecting and the other free-standing, is Listed. So is the house immediately to the west of it, two more a little further on, and two on the opposite side of the road, nos.27 and 37. It stands in a Conservation Area in which even the unlisted houses are noted by Historic England as being 'of special interest'.

I wish to add my objection to this application: I have lived in Kentish Town for the last 16 years, and, as the Ward Councillor for the past 12 years, I know Leighton Road very well. I have also served on Camden's Planning Committee for five years and was the Mayor of Camden from 2018-19. The former Postmen's Sorting Office, dating from 1903, is Grade 11 Listed (Historic England listing reference 1379291). It is also located within the Kentish Town Conservation Area and falls within the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The former Postmen's Sorting Office is undoubtedly one of Kentish Town's *Heritage Assets*. With this in mind, it should be noted that the **National Planning Policy Framework** (2021), paragraph 197, sets out 'the desirability of enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of positive contributions to local character and distinctiveness'.

The London Plan (2012), Policy HC1 on Heritage conservation and growth, sets out that 'proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the asset's significance and appreciation within their surroundings'.

Camden Local Plan Policies (2017), Policy D2 sets out that 'proposals for Listed buildings should not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building or its setting'.

Of greatest relevance is that the **Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance**, CPG Advertisements (2018), encourages 'good quality advertisements that take into account the character and design of the host building and the appearance of its surroundings, and respects its architectural features and external fabric'. It also states that, 'advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings'. Furthermore, and of greatest significance, it states that 'externally illuminated signs should be unobtrusively sized and sited'. The proposed projecting illuminated sign has a size of 350mm in diameter and projects 500 mm from the building, thereby having a total projection of 850mm. This is far too large and unsympathetic in relation to the proportions of the host building, and would ruin the appearance of this much-loved 'historic gem' in Kentish Town.

In my considered view, and those of neighbouring residents who have also submitted objections (Caroline Hill and Dr Gillian Tindall), the proposed addition of two illuminated signs, particularly the projecting one

attached to the frontage of the building, goes against both the letter and the spirit of the many Planning Policies outlined above. **The projecting illuminated sign should most definitely be rejected. The illuminated sign adjacent to the railings is considered to be less inappropriate, but it is not necessary for it to be illuminated.** Unlike, say, a London attraction which may be only visited once in their lives by tourists, a Nursery will be attended regularly by parents over a period of up to four years, and no one forgets the location of their child's nursery! I should mention in this context that I am the parent of three children and three grandchildren, and thereby have a great deal of experience in this field, both with private Nurseries and my University Staff Nursery, where I served on the Management Committee for many years. In my experience, there is seldom a need for an excellent nursery to advertise its services locally in this way, particularly in the age of online marketing.

In conclusion, our collective view is that signs in a Conservation Area should exist for *information*, rather than for the purposes of the *advertisement* of commercial premises. I rebut the claim on page 9 of the 'Kentish Town Planning & Heritage Statement', submitted by FiRSTPLAN, that 'the signage will cause minimal visual impact in terms of street clutter and would not detract from the appearance of the listed buildings or the conservation area'. Looking at the applicant's website, the *n.family club*, the internal and outside play areas of the future Kentish Town nursery look most attractive and the fees suggest that it will appeal to a high-end market. For all reasons given above, it is vital it is that the integrity of the existing historic façade is not compromised by inappropriate and unsympathetic signage, which would decidedly 'lower the tone' of the road, the building and the nursery itself.

I should be happy to attend the Hearing when this application is considered.

Kind regards,
Jenny

Councillor Jenny Headlam-Wells
Chair of the Children Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee
Labour Councillor for Kentish Town South


Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9HE