

Dear Ms Henry,

Reference: 2022/3635/P

I am the flat owner of 11 Howitt Close. I have written previously about Freshwater's planning application – which was rejected once already – and I am writing to you again following their second application for the same works. I maintain my view in relation to my objections to the previous planning application 2021/3839/P. I also make the following objections to the new scheme as follows.

I am aware now through this process that there are certain aspects of a planning permission that technically make it hard to approve. There are many of these aspects of the freeholder's plans. The freeholder knows this. They have had the plans rejected on multiple grounds already – and with good reasons that are just as present in their second attempt. I know that many residents of our community will again cite the vandalism the bizarre addition would mean to our architecturally significant building. Many others will again assert that Belsize Park is a conservation area and we are a building and a community conserved for a purpose. These are both true and valid. It is concurrently deeply funny and deeply worrying that the freeholder's choice of Cotswold Archaeology as a company to consult. They are a countryside archaeological company who are therefore not considered appropriately qualified to judge a 20th-century urban architectural development.

The proposed development represents the introduction of a new storey to Howitt Close which, due to its design, massing and choice of materials, will appear as a prominent, and aesthetically inappropriate, addition to the property. This will result in the building no longer being read as of a height similar to that of the neighbouring properties along Howitt Road but one of greater massing. It would therefore be considered harmful to the setting of the conservation area.

I cannot see how the public benefit of these additional residential units even comes close to outweighing the harm. Yes of course on the designed heritage assets which brings the plans directly into conflict with Paragraph 202 of the NPPF but much more than that. We may state that 'we recognise that there is a need for new housing throughout London'. Yes. But not this type of housing, surely? Any new development needs to accord with the development plan in its entirety. Where and to whom is the benefit of this plan? Clearly not the local community, the residents of Howitt Close and surrounds, or indeed key workers, lower income workers or any of the demographics identified by any (pre-pandemic) housing shortage. The benefit is to the freeholder and the freeholder alone, the many costs external to the build costs borne heavily by residents of our entire area. A classic market failure perhaps and, I would suggest, one of the most compelling reasons for government (or in this case council) intervention.

I note one final point which is actually a question: how does the freeholder propose to manage the water storage facilities issue? Where will the water storage be relocated and how will the 46 flats in the block manage without water during the works? I look forward to hearing what the freeholder plans; perhaps nothing?

Yours sincerely,



Eleanor Prescottt

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