

**From:** Johnson, Steve

**Sent:** 12 November 2022 17:43

**To:** Planning

**Subject:** Great Ormond Street Hospital Application No: 2022/2255/P

Dear Camden Planning,

I am writing in reference to the submitted plans for the rebuild of the Great Ormond Street length of the hospital building.

I am a local resident to the hospital of over 30 years and we have lived for that entire time with the many and constant hospital building programmes carried out within and outside the hospital zone bordered by Gt. Ormond Street, Lambs Conduit Street, Guilford Street, and Queen Square. Construction is just something that has to be accepted as part of living in this community. Since moving into this neighbourhood, the reconstruction of the Gt. Ormond Street length of the hospital has been spoken of, so it is no surprise that, at last, an application has been submitted. A replacement for the inadequate mostly post-war building currently standing in the street must be a good thing both in terms of the hospital's workings and, as an architect, I feel for the aesthetic good of the street.

There have been various public consultations and an architectural competition, and I have tried to attend all of these. What has been presented at these events has, mostly, seemed reasonable and appropriate sets of plans some of which showed good intent of making public realm improvements to Great Ormond Street that would have had a beneficial effect upon the street. This is hugely important as, despite being a huge supporter of the presence of all of the Queen Square hospitals - particularly the childrens' hospital, I have always been aware of what seems to be a complete disregard of the welfare of local people. The earlier published consultation plans showed a glimmer that things might be changing. That was until the newest plans were published.

It is clear that almost all comments about the building have included statements about the nine-storey height of the building looming over the many 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings opposite. The height of this building may be of a similar height to some of the hospital buildings in Guildford Street but that is a wider and more monumental street with some simply dreadful and inappropriately high and massive buildings built between and since the world wars. To someone who doesn't work at the hospital, this building seems excessively large and, having spoken with individuals who work at the hospital - some of whom didn't even know that an application had been submitted - there is great surprise that such a large building has been submitted considering that the current building is,

apparently, not fully used. When one looks at the recently built Zayed Centre for Research - a fine building, in my eyes, that shows that large can be accommodated in this area - the building seems to be mostly empty of users. Might this be what happens with Gt Ormond Street?

And as someone who constantly uses Great Ormond Street to move between Cosmo Place and Lambs Conduit Street and beyond, I was very much looking forward to the proposed pedestrianisation of the street as called out in the architectural competition all those years ago and during more recent public meetings attended by a woman whose role was to oversee the work that would lead to a mostly traffic-free street dramatically improving life for locals and for the staff and children who use the hospital. What a shock to see, in recent published images and text, nods to the beauty of Little Ormond Street's guerrilla gardening but no mention of the pedestrianisation at all in this most recent version of the hospital. With the traffic and congestion that the hospitals generate - mostly necessary it must be assumed - it is always frustrating to see the number of ambulances and taxis with engines running while parked in the street and Queen Square. This is despite this being an Ultra Low-Emissions Zone!

Finally, looking at the plans for accessing the site during demolition and construction, it is simply appalling how the hospital seem to think that whole streets within this neighbourhood are sacrificial in order to see through the construction of a single building. Never have I seen a construction site negatively affect a neighbourhood as much as this one project seems to be calling for. The project Design & Access Statement describes this project as something of an environmentally sound project. Given the intended impact upon the environment of the immediate area, it is difficult to see how this can be the case. Yes, the building images show what looks like a planted piece of architecture with a roof garden, but most of this will minimally benefit people outside the hospital. Looking at the current potted plants and the new planted bench along the street, these, as far as can be detected, are maintained by local people, not the hospital. Will the hospital be able to ensure that anything like the amount of planting shown in the submission will be kept alive?

While attending the small and stuffy room for the latest public consultation, the event, if anything, seemed to anger most of the local people who were there. I for one was reasonably open-minded about the hospital's plans until attending this event. It seemed to serve mainly as a reminder of how this community is an irrelevance to the hospital. I hate to say this as, as stated earlier, I am a tremendous fan of what the hospital does for children and parents, and I am proud to be a long-standing neighbour. It's simply that this set of plans seems to show a building that should be built somewhere else.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Johnson  
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