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Sam Fitzpatrick, Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team, London Borough of Camden

2022/3694/P
2022/4547/L
15 November 2022

Dear Mr Fitzpatrick

Planning Application Reference 2022/3694/P and 2022/4547/L

I am writing regarding the project to develop 12 & 13 Primrose Hill Studios, which is currently under your consideration for planning approval.

I fully support the democratic right of local residents and community groups to comment on planning application submissions. However, they should be doing so on the basis of accurate information.

It is important that you are aware that a local resident has been using misinformation to persuade fellow residents to join her in objecting to the proposals. Linda Seward has written an email to a large number of local residents, providing them with a template for objection. Both her covering email and the template itself contain exaggerations and misinformation about the project. She also appears to be discouraging neighbours from looking at the planning documents for themselves.

Ms Seward fails to mention that there is existing planning permission for the site for a more substantial and considerably less sensitive scheme, which the owners could choose to build at any time. We have made every effort in our proposals to improve on this scheme and to design a project which is in keeping with the character of the Primrose Hill Studios complex and the wider Conservation Area, aiming to safeguard the heritage assets of the site.

I have here included the text from Linda Seward's email of 7 November, with our comments:

LINDA SEWARD EMAIL OF 7 NOV 2022

Subject: VERY IMPORTANT NEWS: PLEASE READ

Once again, we find ourselves faced with a basement excavation that will cause problems for the residents of Kingstown Street, Auden Place and the Primrose Hill Studios.

If you go to the Camden Planning Website here: <https://accountforms.camden.gov.uk/planning-search/> and type in the application number above, **you will be faced with thousands of drawings, reports and statements. It's almost impossible to get through and understand everything that is in that application.**

I will break it down for you:

JFA COMMENTS

Our Design and Access Statement is a concise planning document. It is intended to make the proposals clear, not to confuse. It contains **25 drawings** as well as helpful 'before and after' views.

These comments appear to **encourage people not to look at the submission documents for themselves.**

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The applicants, currently residents of The Lodge (Studio 13) are planning to **consolidate two historic Grade-listed studios into one large individual residential estate.**

The proposal is to construct a large basement running under both the site of a double garage on Kingstown Street (recently demolished) and the existing No. 12 Primrose Hill Studios. They plan to **create a private garden over the basement surrounded by a high brick wall.**

In reality, digging this **huge basement** will require removal of a considerable amount of clay with the high risk of damaging neighbouring houses/studios and causing disruption to the local drains and underground watercourse, not to mention **blocking the only access to the street.** In addition, there would be **significant disruption over at least two years** in a small and busy street regularly used by the local residents, including those in the Auden Place estate and those using the nursery school which is located in the estate.

You may have been approached by the applicants, who are **exerting serious pressure on local residents to support their plan.** Do not be fooled by promises. Local residents **face at least two years of misery due to the noise, dust, mud, constant traffic of large lorries and blockages to the street when deliveries are made.**

The architect for this development, Jamie Fobert, recently caused terrible disruption when his big project at 1 Fitzroy Road lasted a very long time, resulting in one family actually selling their property and moving out as they couldn't take the mayhem any longer. **As a famous architect, he seems to have little regard for ordinary people who are the local residents around his projects.** We have no reason to believe he will act any differently with this project.

The project does not combine two studios.

Both the studio and the small caretakers lodge will be retained as separate entities with separate deeds. They will however be occupied by a single family. Together they form a home which is substantially smaller than most of the houses on Fitzroy Road, and which can by no means be described as a 'large residential estate'

There has always been a private garden – we are simply enlarging it. The proposed wall is **4.4 m** high whereas the extant planning permission allow us to build to **5.8m**. So, the proposal substantially reduces the size of the wall.

The basement is purposefully modest, at **58 m sq GIA**, which approximates the size of the historic studio interiors. It will be a minimum of 3.2m from neighbouring foundations.

We have intentionally **designed the basement to avoid risk to neighbouring houses and drains.** In fact, the drain which exits through the garden of number 12 is badly damaged and part of the project is to repair this drain. No other drains or underground water courses will be affected.

We will not block access to the street.

The applicants have taken great care and time to take local residents through the principles of the project and demonstrate a significant improvement to the extant planning approval. They held a community consultation event on Friday 7 October (which Ms Seward did not attend).

The build will not take even close to two years. The current programme is for **66 weeks.**

These are unsubstantiated, unjustified and possibly defamatory comments.

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Even if you don't live in the immediate vicinity, I urge you to send in an objection to this application as soon as possible. Allowing this application to go through will set a terrible precedent that could affect you on your own street in the future.

I am attaching a letter that you are welcome to change slightly and/or copy and send. You can upload your letter onto the website and/or send a letter to the planning officer.

Sam FitzPatrick:
Sam.FitzPatrick@camden.gov.uk

Thanks for your help on this. Do let me know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,
Linda Seward

LINDA SEWARD'S LETTER TEMPLATE

Application Number: 2022/3694/P
Associated Application Number: 2022/4547/L

Dear Mr Fitzpatrick,

I am writing to lodge an objection to the plans to excavate a basement below the recently demolished garages connected to "The Lodge" (Studio 13) and extending this basement beneath Studio 12, thus creating a **large enclave** connecting the two studios.

The proposal changes the nature of the historic listed buildings from two artisan studios to one **over-large residential unit**. In addition, I understand that **the demolition of the complete interiors of both houses** is contrary to listed building rules and intentions, as it does not protect the buildings at all.

Combining two houses for one family's use doesn't seem appropriate when there is such a shortage of housing in Camden. New building in Camden should provide more housing for residents—this project will result in a net loss of at least one housing unit.

JFA COMMENTS

We have been working closely with Purcell Architects, historic specialists, and they in turn are working closely with **Historic England's Conservation Principles** (2008). The interior of No13, the Caretaker's Lodge, was substantially damaged in a WWII bomb blast and subsequent C20th remodelling removed all remaining historic interior details. At the same time, **restoring the Painting Room of No12** is a major focus of the project. We are reconfiguring the service spaces of No12, but we are doing this in accordance with Purcell's advice, and following substantial modifications in the 1960s.

While it has been proposed that the two small properties will be used by one family, **the two buildings will be retained as separate entities** with separate deeds and will not be physically linked in any new way, so they can be occupied independently at a later date.

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This extensive basement excavation will wreak havoc with local amenities such as electrics, underground water courses, internet connections etc. It will destabilise adjacent houses and set a precedent. It is unsustainable.

The applicants have taken **a great deal of time and trouble to try to pressure me and the rest of the neighbourhood into not opposing the application.** However, I do strongly oppose it for the reasons given above.

I hope that the Camden Planners will do the right thing and refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Your name and address

The proposed basement has been designed to be a minimum of 3.2m from adjacent houses. Our Structural Engineers, Elliott Wood, have stated in their Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) that **"...the proposals will not compromise the structural stability of the existing, adjacent or local structures"**.

We believe that our clients have acted in an **open and democratic** fashion, investing a considerable amount of time sharing accurate information and meeting with neighbours, including holding a lively and well-attended community consultation event on Friday 7 October. They have acted admirably and with community-minded spirit.

It is clear that Ms Seward is using inaccuracies and inflammatory language in the hope of initiating a multitude of objections. Given the content of her email, I would be surprised if local residents did not respond, though they may be doing so under a misapprehension of the facts.

As a planner, you must have encountered these kinds of tactics before, though I have to say that in my 30 years as an architect, I have never come across anyone using misinformation to this extent in order to persuade others of their point of view.

I hope you will give due regard to this unfortunate situation.

Yours sincerely



Jamie Fobert CBE
Director
For and on behalf of Jamie Fobert Architects Limited