



45 Welbeck Street
London W1G 8DZ



Mr David Fowler
Planning Solutions Team
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

11 November 2022

Dear Mr Fowler

Re: Full planning application for proposed development at Selkirk House, 166 High Holborn, 1 Museum Street, 10-12 Museum Street, 35-41 New Oxford Street and 16A-18 West Central Street, London, WC1A 1JR (ref. 2021/2954/P)

This objection letter is submitted on behalf of our clients Deekay Property Ltd, who manage the Cuban Embassy building at 167 High Holborn. It does not seek to object to the principle of the proposed Selkirk House development. Rather, we object to the constraints it poses to additional development at the Cuban Embassy.

The Cuban Embassy

The building is five-storeys in height, comprising office space and is entirely occupied by the Embassy of Cuba. The building's frontage is on High Holborn; however, it extends further back along Grape Street. The site is adjacent to the Grade II listed Shaftesbury Theatre to the west and 168 High Holborn to the east. It is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is described as 'an unlisted building of merit'.

The Proposed Development

The proposed development at Selkirk House is for the redevelopment of the site, to provide a comprehensive office-led, mixed-use scheme with town centre uses at ground floor level. It incorporates the remodelling and extension of 10-12 Museum Street, 35-41 New Oxford Street and 16A-18 West Central Street to provide further active ground floor uses and residential floorspace, including affordable housing provision.

The development is proposed to comprise 4+ buildings at varying heights, ranging from 5-21 storeys. The proposed High Holborn block, which is located immediately to the east of the Cuban Embassy (figure 1), is 5-6 storeys high and will comprise a solely residential use (Class C3). It is this block, and in particular the uppermost duplex unit, that is the focus of this letter.

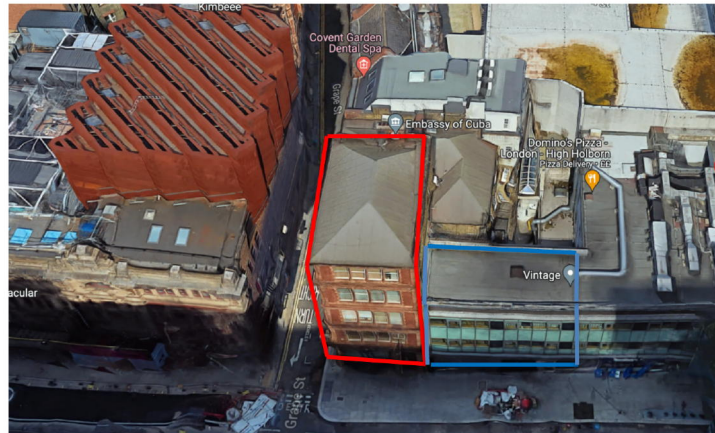


Figure 1: Aerial view of The Cuban Embassy (outlined in red) and 166 High Holborn (outlined in blue)

Impact of proposed development on development of the Cuban Embassy

Owing to the townscape context of the Cuban Embassy, including the emerging urban capacity potential inclusive of the Selkirk House proposal, the building is a candidate to accommodate additional storeys.

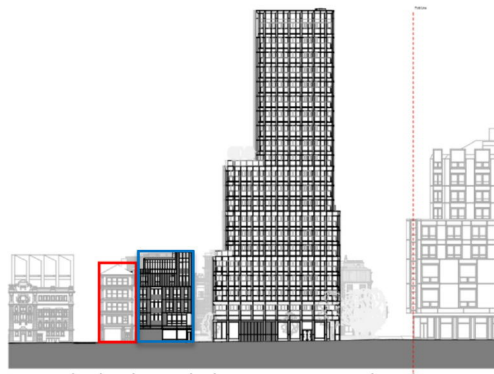


Figure 2: Proposed High Holborn elevation (Embassy of Cuba defined in red and High Holborn in blue)

Camden Local Plan policy A1 requires development to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected with respect of visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing.

Paragraph 2.36 of the Camden Local Plan states:

"Developments should be designed to facilitate, and allow links to, any future development of adjacent sites and opportunities for comprehensive wider development should be fully explored."

London Plan policy D3 states that buildings and spaces should positively respond to local distinctiveness through the layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, having due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions. Additionally, buildings should deliver appropriate outlook, privacy and amenity.

The High Holborn block features a single three-bedroom duplex apartment and the introduction of a terrace area on the fifth floor on the western side of the building (figure 3), which will overlook the roof of the Cuban Embassy. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the fifth-floor sets back to respond to the Cuban Embassy building (figure 4). However, there is no consideration for the future development of the building nor of the unit becoming a sensitive receptor.

Should development come forward at the Cuban Embassy, it would be severely constrained as any additional building heights could lead to neighbouring amenity impacts on the unit's terrace space and the living room space. This would come in the form of overshadowing, particularly in the evenings, as well as loss of outlook and associated matters (sense of enclosure, loss of privacy, etc) owing to the unit's west facing fenestration.

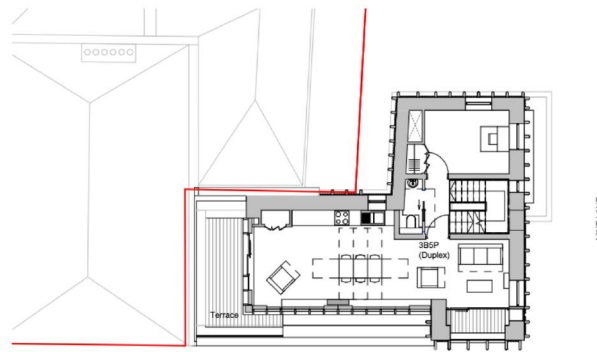
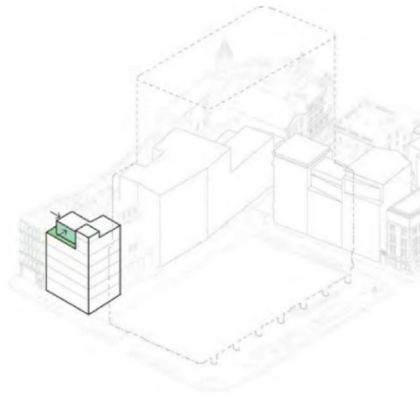


Figure 3: Fifth floor plan of the site showing roof terrace in context with The Cuban Embassy



O4. Setback to the fifth floor attic responds to the adjacent Cuban Embassy whilst also providing opportunity for outdoor amenity space

Figure 4: Extract from DAS showing set back to fifth floor

In accordance with Policy A1 and supplementary text, and indeed as a matter of planning principle, it is reasonable to expect the applicant to consider the future development of neighbouring sites so not to compromise their potential. This is especially true in built-up, urban areas where the intensification of brownfield sites is a fundamental national policy objective.

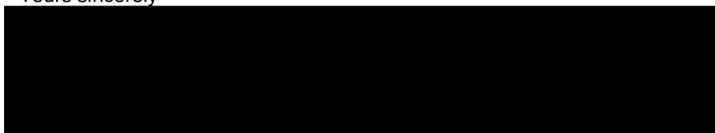
It is therefore requested that the Council requires the applicant to amend the scheme to reconfigure the unit layout. This could come in the form of reducing the depth of the terrace space and incorporating it into a reworked floor plan, which replaces the west-facing fenestration with a flank wall. This will result in a satisfactory relationship between the two buildings, which will protect and accommodate the amenity of future residents and importantly, not compromise the future development of the Cuban Embassy building.

Conclusion

In summary, Deekay Property Ltd support the redevelopment of Selkirk House in principle. However, they object to the current layout of the duplex unit in the High Holborn building. It is therefore requested that the Council requires the applicant to amend the design in order to ensure better living conditions for future residents and the safeguarding of the Cuban Embassy's future development.

We look forward to receiving written confirmation that the objection has been received and registered.

Yours sincerely



Mark J Westcott, MRTPI
Director