
From: Julie Carpenter
Sent: 26 November 2022 16:01
To: Kate Henry
Subject: Howitt Close planning application

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious. Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

Dear Ms Henry,

I am a flat owner in Howitt Close and I am writing to object to the planning application 2022/3635/P.

I have forwarded below my email objecting to the previous planning application (2021/3839/P) and I stand by the views expressed there.

This is essentially the same planning application, with some very minor adjustments, and I can see very little material difference between the two. Crucially, both are completely inappropriate for the building and surrounding area, as has also been stated by so many individuals, residents and bodies - including the Camden Area Advisory Committee and The Belsize Society.

Camden Council refused planning permission for the first application with good reason and I cannot see anything here that merits changing that decision. As has been well established, Howitt Close makes "a positive contribution" to the conservation area, sitting perfectly in its surroundings, and is a distinctive, unaltered Art Deco building - exactly the type of building that should be preserved.

The suggested plans would utterly change this and ruin the building's aesthetic integrity, impacting on the surrounding conservation area. The new application is still the same in its scope and magnitude and is a huge extension, which will make the building appear unduly prominent in its surroundings (contrary to the applicant's assertions) for very few new

dwellings. As Camden Council stated when it turned down the first planning application, the proposed plans would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area and any perceived benefits of the scheme “would not outweigh the harm.”

I can see that a few details have been tweaked by the applicant in this second application. The roof is no longer a “mansard” but what the applicant has described as “contemporary” - with sloping sides leading to a flatter top. This is no more appropriate and does not constitute an improvement. This so-called “contemporary” style will still prove a complete mis-match with the current Art Deco building, which has remained unaltered since it was built. **Consequently, the proposal does not in any way demonstrate either preservation or enhancement**, which is a pre-requisite in a conservation area (and defined in Policy D2). The applicant doesn’t even seem to be arguing this. The best they seem to say is that it would be a “neutral” addition, something which I would still strongly disagree with. Last time the applicant proposed a more Elizabethan roof, this time they have opted for this nowhere land “contemporary” suggestion but both are incongruous with a 1930s Art Deco building. All its heritage significance will be lost.

Camden Council concluded the last proposal demonstrated “neither preservation nor enhancement” and this application must surely be dismissed on the same grounds.

I would also object to the attempt made by the applicant to denigrate the architects who designed Howitt Close and who have a Grade II listed building to their name, namely the iconic Elm Park Court, as well as the notable 1932 Ambassador Cinema at Hendon Central. To dismiss their achievements based on their RIBA status seems both wrong and anachronistic, given many gifted architects who designed listed buildings did not choose to affiliate themselves with any society at the time. I see a member of The Belsize Society has robustly defended the architects which I hope is being given its due weight.

In addition, Cotswold Archaeology - the company chosen by the applicant to provide a heritage statement - appears to be an unsuitable choice to pass judgement on Howitt Close. I understand that they are a countryside archaeological company whereas Howitt Close is an example of twentieth century urban architecture.

All of the points above are in addition to all the unwanted disruption the building work would cause, the pressure on services in the area that would be created and the complete disregard for the wishes of the leaseholders. It cannot be underestimated how stressful this process has been. The mental health of the leaseholders seems to have not been considered at all. Despite this being the second planning application made by the applicant, there has been no consultation with leaseholders whatsoever, presumably because the freeholder is aware of the huge amount of opposition amongst us.

I gather there is also an issue with the block’s water storage facilities. The proposed development would involve removing them but fails to provide an area where they would be relocated. This seems to be just another point which demonstrates a lack of care and detail.

I sincerely hope this second application is refused.

Please find my original objection below.

Thanks and best wishes,
J Carpenter

Begin forwarded message:

Subject: Howitt Close planning application

Date: 15 November 2021 at 21:26:55 GMT

Dear Kate,

I am writing to you as the leaseholder , to lodge my objection to the proposed rooftop development on Howitt Close under planning application 2021/3839/P.

I have been the leaseholder of 30 Howitt Close for many years, so know the building and the area well. I see the development as being wholly unsuitable and a very negative move for a number of reasons:

- **Howitt Close is a distinctive Art Deco design with characteristic flat roof.** The building is specifically listed in Camden's own Conservation Area Statement as being one that makes "*a positive contribution to the conservation area*" of Belsize. However, the proposed development would fundamentally change the design and result in a stylistic mish mash, losing a distinct part of its character - something that no doubt drew many of us to buy in the building in the first place - and so proving detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation area as a whole. For the application to say the building as it stands looks "unfinished" shows a complete lack of appreciation of the Art Deco style and the decision by the applicant to include it clearly demonstrates the weakness of their overall argument.
 - Additionally, it is not true to say the block is at a lower height compared to nearby houses, so building another storey on Howitt Close will cause the building to seem unduly dominant and can only have a negative impact on nearby residents' light.
- **The development itself will create a very significant disturbance whilst the building work is ongoing**, both through the noise pollution to the block's residents and neighbours (how could residents possibly work from home?) and also in the context of the additional strain on local parking as well as increasing local traffic from the lorries/other vehicles associated with the build.
 - The issue of parking in particular will continue post the building work given the increase in housing in the area created by the new flats.

Others have already questioned whether the infrastructure of the building could even support another storey and there is an additional question mark over whether a lift would have to be retrospectively added and where this could possibly go.

Another point I'd like to raise is that there has been **no consultation between the applicant and any of the leaseholders in the block**, despite their plans adversely affecting everyone who lives there. Surely this demonstrates a lack

of consideration and courtesy at the very least. Neither had there even been any notification of their intentions until a letter from the solicitors Freeths dated October 27th which was *after* Camden's initial consultation period was due to expire on October 23rd.

Before then, the only notice informing anyone directly affected by the proposal had been Camden's small notice pinned to a tree near the block which could be easily overlooked.

I also note that the applicant listed a Construction Management Plan (CMP) as included in their application but omitted to include it, only submitting it at a later date. I am no expert in such documents, but I notice that it states:

"A neighbourhood consultation process must have been undertaken prior to submission of the CMP first draft...This must be undertaken in the spirit of cooperation rather than one that is dictatorial and unsympathetic to the wellbeing of local residents and businesses...The consultation and discussion process should have already started, with the results incorporated into the CMP first draft submitted to the Council for discussion and sign off."

None of this has been adhered to by the applicant.

I consider the reasons for blocking the development to be compelling and hope that Camden Council will agree and refuse to grant approval to a project that already has a huge amount of opposition.

Please contact me on my email address if you would like to discuss any of these points further.

Thanks very much,

Julie Carpenter