

Howitt Close 2022/3635/P

Objection to new plan – this document contains

Objection to Planning Application 2021/3839/P emailed to Kate Henry 25/10/21

+ Online comment 17/11/21 22.14

Dear Kate Henry

I strongly object to the Planning Application 2021/3839/P for an extra floor on our building.

I am pleased the time for comments has been extended as we were only alerted, by fellow residents, 30th September that a single notice had gone up the day before on a lamppost near one end of our horseshoe drive – the end not seen by those walking straight up Howitt Road.

The pre-application advice states “The construction process could potentially bring about significant noise and disruption to existing occupiers of Howitt Close. A construction management plan would be required to help mitigate impacts but before this stage, you are strongly advised to consult with existing occupants and involve them in the process.” Leaseholders and residents have had no such consultation and have not seen any detail of how the construction process would be managed.

Noise disturbance, traffic/parking congestion which is already problematic down the narrow street and the insecurity of being surrounded by scaffolding would make life intolerable for residents in the block and indeed the immediate neighbourhood. Many residents work from home and/or are retired and spend considerable time at home.

Howitt Close is located in Camden Council’s Belsize Conservation Area and has been identified by Camden Council as a building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. As an Art Deco building the flat roof is an appropriate feature. There is no reason why a block of flats, while reflecting the architecture of the area, should fully match nearby terraced housing. Viewed from Glenilla Road and Howitt Road it is an attractive building with the flat roof contributing to its not dominating the neighbourhood.

This development would not ‘preserve and enhance’ the Conservation Area’s established character and appearance especially if the horseshoe drive a small garden area are lost – or damaged during construction.

The latest proposals may be an improvement on earlier designs for an extra floor but, despite claims in the application, Howitt Close is at a similar height to the surrounding buildings. The extra height would be aesthetically detrimental and is likely to have an impact on light and privacy for nearby residents notably the houses immediately opposite the front of the building and our immediate neighbour in Howitt Road.

I noticed in the “Application Form” that there would be “dedicated internal and external storage space for dry recycling, food waste and residual waste” – there is currently inadequate provision for waste and recycling and no food waste collection. In the full application I have now seen the addition of a bin store but I am not convinced this will meet the needs of the whole block.

I also noted “electrical heating” for the 7 new residential units – what about heating the rest of the block? What is proposed for the water tank on the roof? Will the old water and sewerage pipes cope with an extra 7 units? And I believe there may already be an issue with subsidence.

I hope Camden Council will recognise this development would be detrimental to the Conservation Area and cause undue stress, disturbance and hardship to residents both in the block and in the neighbourhood.

Yours sincerely Marion Hill



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When I sent my previous objection - emailed 25/10 and posted online 27/10/21 16.11 – we had not yet seen the Construction Management Plan which, though dated March 2021, was posted with the planning documents only at 19.55 on 27/10/21.

And it was only 29/10/21 (6 days after the original deadline for comments) that I received, Special Delivery by 1pm, the letter sent to leaseholders by Freeths, giving us notice that they'd been instructed by Daejan Properties Ltd to submit a planning application in relation to Howitt Close. The formal notice informed us we should "write to the council within 21 days of the date of the notice" – the date being 27/10/21 though we didn't receive it until 29/10/21. This notice only went to leaseholders – not all residents – but it did mean a further extension of the closing date for comments.

The Construction Management Plan is only a draft and contains much "tbc" and "information is not available" and it appears the only consultation with residents, other than through the planning application process, is proposed for later, when the works are set to go ahead. We certainly had no prior consultation as recommended by the Council in the pre-Application documents.

Before I read the CMP I'd heard that it included having a 2-storey welfare cabin on our front garden. I looked all the way through the text of the document and even searched for the word "Welfare" – it appears twice but only in relation to "any proposal to occupy the highway for vehicle pit lanes, materials unloading/crane pick points, site welfare etc." The 2-storey welfare cabin only appears in the drawing on p42. This would destroy our front lawn with rose bush and lavender.

In the Application Form, they claim there will be no loss, gain or change of use of any open space. Our front garden would be destroyed by the 2-storey welfare cabin and I fear there will inevitably be loss or damage to the trees and bushes in the thin strip of garden at the back of the building. This at a time when COP26 and life in Lockdown have highlighted the benefits of open space and greenery for people and planet.

Questions have been raised concerning the water tank currently on the roof but I'm not aware of any mention of the Electricity Sub-station – if that's the right name for the out-building at the back of Howitt Close that has Danger of Death signs on it.

The Heritage Statement states that Howitt Close "comprises a residential apartment block of three storeys (plus basement) in height." I'm not aware of this extra floor being mentioned anywhere in the plans yet there are 4 flats in this lower-ground floor as well as the boiler room etc.

The 7 proposed flats would not be social housing. The people who could afford them would surely not want to live on the 3rd floor of a block without lifts.

I remain concerned at how the extra water, heating, lighting, sewage, rubbish disposal and internet requirements would be integrated with those of the 46 existing flats and how service would be maintained through construction.

Life during construction would be intolerable for residents who spend much time at home whether retired or working from home – or working nights at the hospital. I've mentioned before concerns for security and also access for emergency vehicles or the many deliveries currently made to the various residents. Our neighbours in the already congested streets would also suffer.

But having looked again at the photos in the plans and the heritage statement and looked at the building from along Howitt Road and Glenilla Road I just think the building fits in so beautifully. I strongly object to any building onto the flat roof which is in keeping with the Art Deco style or any development of Howitt Close considered as it is in the Council's Belsize Conservation Area Statement to "make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area".