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Re: 2019/2375/P and 2019/2491/L

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum objects to the proposed change of use of the site, for 26 Rosslyn Hill, from a police station (*sui generis*) to a one-form entry school (Use Class D1) for 210 pupils and business/enterprise space (Class B1) including alterations to the rear and associated works.

Impact on local schools

The Forum is concerned that the development of a new school in the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan area will have a detrimental impact on the existing state schools such as New End Primary, which currently is operating substantially under capacity. We note that the projected demand in Camden for state school primary places is expected to decline by 530 places by 2021/22¹ and understand that the projected decline in demand for places in both Hampstead and Belsize Park is particularly severe.

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) Policy HC2 *Community Facilities* states that local schools in the Plan area should be supported. Local schools lose £5000 for every unfilled place and ever greater losses places ever greater pressures on the quality of education that these school can provide to the local community.

Harm to a heritage asset

The loss of the original furniture within the Magistrates Court would cause unacceptable harm to the heritage asset and therefore is contrary to HNP Policy DH1 and DH2, which require proposals to protect and/or enhance buildings or other elements that make a positive contribution to the conservation area. As the listing notes, "The high-status of the courthouse is manifest in the internal joinery and plasterwork, and the courtroom has an extensive scheme of panelling and furniture." Without the furniture, the most important room of the building would lose any indication of its original purpose, greatly reducing its historical significance.

¹ 2018 GLA School Place Demand Projections

The proposed ramp to the front entrance likewise would damage the “bold and assured composition of considerable civic presence”.

Impact on local traffic, pollution

The proposal is contrary to the emerging **London Plan Policy S3 B 3** (see paragraph 5.3.10), which states that new schools should be located away from busy roads.

Air pollution evidence

The air quality assessment submitted by Ridge and Partners on behalf of the applicants (e.g. Figure 6, May 2019, REC), acknowledges that Rosslyn Hill and the pavement side along it, significantly exceed the legal limit for NO₂ which is 40.

In 2016, the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum conducted a survey of air quality in the Plan area. We measured the NO₂ levels on Rosslyn Hill nearby the site of the Police Station to be 56.07% i.e. 40% above the legal limit.

Survey and measurements (reference: pages 3 to 8 of the enclosed Air pollution objections report) conducted by a member of the committee of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, during the morning school runs in April and June 2019, also show significant amount of particulates 2.5 and 10 pollution along the pavement in front of the Hampstead police station. It is stated in # 2.1 of the Camden Planning Guidance – Air Quality – March 2019 that “it is widely accepted that there is no safe level for particulates (PM 10 and smaller). Air quality is particularly severe along major roads through the borough”.

Furthermore, the Review of Air Quality Issues commissioned by HCRD to Southwest Environmental Limited writes, in its conclusion, the following: “Considering the sensitivity of the receptors and the likely under representation of the source concentrations. It would be irresponsible of Camden Borough Council to grant planning for a school at this site. It is the consultant’s opinion that owing to the nature of nitrogen dioxide as a toxin; with the lack of a maximum safe exposure level, that to allow planning permission for a school at this location would be akin to knowingly expose children to significant harm.”

Air Pollution and traffic

Children walking to and from this location would be exposed to unacceptable levels of air pollution, yet no outdoor measures have been included to that effect. In any event it would be physically nearly impossible to reduce the existing outdoor pollution along the road under the current circumstances.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the number of traffic movements as a result of the development will not increase, contrary to **paragraph 4.33 of the Camden Local Plan**, which states that the Council will refuse applications for new schools in Hampstead and Belsize Park unless this can be shown. Under the proposed scheme, the school is unlikely to open before the fall of 2022. It would not be compliant in 2023 and afterwards with PTAL at level 4.

The proposal also fails to articulate robust sanctions framework that could assure a car-free development.

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy TT1 requires that mitigating measures must ensure there is no net decrease in air quality within the plan area as a result of development. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that its application would not worsen air quality – at least some increase in car journeys is inevitable – and no mitigation measures have been provided that would reduce the impact to acceptable levels.

In submitted comments dated 3 June 2019, the Chair of Governors of the New End Primary School, stated that “based on our experience, it is simply not credible that any new school will not generate extra traffic, pollution and tensions with residents”. Similar conclusions were also drawn by the Chair of Governors of Rosary Catholic School.

The suggested travel logistics and the no car policy also does not stand to scrutiny when one takes into account the additional planned capacity of the school. eighty-nine of the proposed two hundred and ten pupils currently don't exist, so they could come from anywhere. For example, in the 2016 application papers the location of pupils was spread from Cricklewood to Kilburn; and from Hendon Way to Regents Park. Twenty-three of the fifty pupils were outside the catchment area. We note that the Director of Education Commissioning for Camden, in page 4 of the letter addressed to the Council on 10th June 2019, also warns us of the possibility that the current roll could change and come from further afield. There is also the possibility that parents currently residing in the catchment area may move further afield.

Furthermore, we believe that the applicants have failed to take into account the *greater* likelihood of car use resulting from the school's relocation closer to its catchment area. At present the longer journey to Kings Cross, through busy roads, is a disincentive to car use, but the shorter journey and greater choice of routes offered by the new location is likely to increase the attractiveness of car use.

The additional impact of the proposed “business/enterprise space” on traffic and pollution has not been properly factored either.

Local amenity

The proposed design includes a 4m-high acoustic wall to the rear of the building neighbouring houses on Downshire Hill. We agree with the conclusion reached by the consultant Southwest Environmental Limited in their June 2019 report, reference S16-296, that “will (this) overshadow large portion of south facing gardens in breach of BRE209 criteria. Despite the imposition of this monolithic structure, and near complete loss of garden sunlight, sounds levels will remain twice as loud as those recommended in relevant British Standards.”

Basement Impact Assessment

The proposal calls for excavating a portion of the lower ground floor. No BIA has been provided contrary to policy A5 of the plan.

Trees

As outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan, the site adjoins Biodiversity Corridor F Rear gardens Hampstead Hill Gardens, also designated as a Historic Tree Line. This area is currently unilluminated and supports a significant bat and wild bee population with an active wild beehive within two feet of the Stables party wall. Here it is particularly pertinent that the proposed rooflights on the old Police Stables at the rear of the site are against Policy NE4: the use of restrained lighting.

Health facilities and Community Facility

The objection letter addressed to the Council on 14th June 2019 by the NHS Keats Group Practice, located at very close proximity to the site, is clear evidence that this application will not “protect existing health facilities”, contrary to Policies C1 and C2 of the Local Plan. This letter also demonstrates that this application does the opposite of supporting this community facility, contrary to paragraph 8.11 of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

We urge Camden to reject this proposed change of use as it is contrary to the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Plan and the emerging London Plan.

Sincerely,

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