



Letter to Gareth John, Ealing Council (by email)

Date : 4th October 2019

Dear Gareth

KENMURE MANSIONS, PITSHANGER LANE, 193235FUL

I am writing to you on behalf of the Pitshanger Community Association (PCA). We are registered charity (no: 1151457) based in the Pitshanger area of Ealing W5. The PCA is listed on the constraints tab on the planning portal entry for 193235FUL as a statutory consultee.

The Pitshanger Community Association wishes to object to the proposed expansion of Kenmure Mansions, 111-153 Pitshanger Lane, W5 1RJ (Ref: 193235FUL) (the "**Proposed Expansion**"). While the PCA is not opposed to new housing in the area, we nevertheless submit that this application is contrary to both London and Ealing planning policy. It would lead to a vast overdevelopment of the site, resulting in significant long-term detrimental impact on the character of the area and the amenities available both to the proposed site and neighbouring properties.

Further to this, we feel that it is important that the Council act in a manner consistent with The Lindens, Queens Walk application (Ref: 181044FUL) which was a similar proposal, albeit on a much smaller scale, that was refused in April 2018. This application was refused on three grounds, namely: (i) the proposal by reason of its scale and massing was not subordinate to the original apartment block and set an undesirable precedent for future similar proposals in the area; (ii) the proposed development by reason of its bulk, scale, massing and prominent location represented an undesirable development that would detrimentally affect the appearance of the original dwelling and be an intrusive addition to the street scene; and (iii) insufficient and contradictory evidence had been provided to determine whether the proposed development would have had detrimental impact upon residents' amenity.

It is clear from the reasons given in The Lindens refusal that the council intended that its decisions to, or foresaw that its decisions will, act as precedents for future planning applications. Therefore, the council should be bound to refuse the proposed Expansion, since all three of the above objections apply here to a much greater degree.

We set out our key objections to the Proposed Expansion below.

Scale of Development and Impact on Character of the Locality

London Plan Policy 3.5 (Quality and Design of Housing Developments) requires housing developments to be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context to the wider environment. The draft London Plan 2019 *Policy GG2 Making the best use of land* includes the advice that designs should understand what is valued about existing places and use this as a catalyst for growth, renewal, and place-making, strengthening London's distinct and varied character. We do not feel that this proposal presents a high-quality development, and certainly lacks quality in relation to its context with the wider environment of Pitshanger Lane and the surrounding area.

More specifically, Policies 7.4 (Local Character) and 7.6 (Architecture) require development to have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings; and that architecture should make a positive contribution to the streetscape. The Proposed Expansion would most certainly be out of scale to the surrounding buildings and thus make a negative contribution to the streetscape. Indeed, given the excessive and overbearing nature of the Proposed Expansion, we consider it unlikely that the applicant has given any proper consideration to these policies.

In addition to being in opposition with London Plan policies, the Proposed Expansion is in direct conflict with policies contained within Ealing's Local Plan. Policy 7.4 (Local Character) of the Development Management document confirms that development in Ealing's existing built up areas should, amongst other things, complement their street sequence, building pattern and scale, none of which the Proposed Expansion does.

By way of addressing these policies, the application contains just one line in the accompanying Planning Policy Statement (prepared by Washington Young LLP), which states, at paragraph 6.11, that *"it is considered that the proposal positively enhances the streetscape of Pitshanger Lane due to its increase in height and bulk."*

We consider this sentence to be extremely contradictory and demonstrates that no meaningful consideration has been given to the long-established scale of development and character of Pitshanger Lane. The site of the Proposed Expansion is already taller than both the opposite side of the street and the surrounding houses, but still consistent with the look and feel of the area. Adding any height or bulk to Kenmure Mansions would make the south side of Pitshanger Lane completely disproportionate with the north and with the houses on the adjacent streets (Queens Walk, Glencairn Drive and Albert Road), thus affecting the streetscape and putting at risk the livelihood of this award-winning High Street. There are three primary risks in this regard:

- altering the streetscape making Pitshanger Lane less visually appealing for visitors
- removing sunlight for the cafes on the northern side of the Lane at key times during the day making them less appealing to patronise (as further detailed below)
- the construction would cause serious disruption to the Lane, during which time it is estimated that all businesses on the south side of the Lane and many on the north side may decide to close for the duration or will choose to move location, forever altering the character of both Pitshanger Lane and the surrounding neighbourhood.

We would strongly argue that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the streetscape of Pitshanger Lane due to the increase in Kenmure Mansions' increase in height and bulk.

We appreciate that comments on planning applications should not solely express concerns about the issues that arise during the building work, but rather focus on the overall impact of proposals. The PCA considers that the building work will have a detrimental impact overall on businesses in Pitshanger Lane, taking the Streets for People exercise as an example. During the construction period, the Proposed Expansion would have an effect on the surrounding area in terms of noise, pollution and loss of use of the pavements on the southern side of Pitshanger Lane – the numbers of visitors and shoppers will undoubtedly fall and may not return when the work is complete.

In 2010, the Transport for London's and LBE's Streets for People initiative was implemented on Pitshanger Lane. During the 26 weeks work, the pavement layout was altered, bus stops moved and new street furniture/streetlights were installed. Over the 26 weeks, the amount of footfall on the Pitshanger Lane dropped to such an extent that about a quarter of the 50 shops shut during the building works. Many closed permanently and only were taken on by new owners many months afterwards. When Pitshanger Lane eventually recovered from that downturn to win the Great British High Street (London) award, the then local government minister said "Pitshanger Lane won the award for GBHS London in 2015 because it is a community hub. There are few places in London like it. By selling goods and services that compete well against on-line shopping and which could not be found in an out of town retail park, the local businesses and community have created something 'very, very special'." (Mr Jones MP from Ealing Council News 24th May 2016).

We therefore consider the Proposed Expansion creates a threat to the long-term viability of some 50+ independent traders and therefore contrary to Ealing and London planning policies quoted above. In addition, the Proposed Expansion would not be consistent with London Plan Policy 7.6 (Architecture) states developments should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings.

Impact on Amenity (including Light, Privacy, Noise and Pollution)

We do not consider that the Proposed Expansion would result in a high standard of amenity for users or for adjacent uses, contrary to both Ealing's Development Management Policy 7B (Design Amenity) and London Plan Policy 7.6 (Architecture), which states development should *not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to privacy, overshadowing, wind and microclimate*. This is for the following reasons:

- i. as described above, the Proposed Expansion, by reason of its excessive scale and bulk, would not result in a positive visual impact and would detract significantly from the uniqueness and charm of Pitshanger Lane.
- ii. the additional height will adversely impact the light received by Pitshanger Lane and the residential houses on the immediately adjacent streets. The Proposed Expansion is for the southern side of Pitshanger Lane and so would cast long shadows onto the northern side, negatively affecting businesses and flats there, which the applicant's

Daylight and Sunlight Report, prepared by Waldrams, concedes. However, the report is fundamentally deficient in that it completely ignores the impact on the adjacent streets, in particular Glencairn Drive.

- iii. any additional storeys at this location are considered to result in negative impacts to privacy of surrounding residents; namely the gardens to the south side of Glencairn Drive, the residential flats on the north side of Pitshanger Lane and the houses in Queens Walk.
- iv. the increase in noise from the additional 44 units would be highly undesirable for surrounding residents.
- v. the volume of traffic would be set to increase, resulting in an increase of pollution which again, has negative impacts.
- vi. none of the additional units appear to benefit from private amenity and no form of communal amenity space is shown on the available drawings. Thus, the Proposed Expansion goes against Table 7D.2 of Ealing's Development Management Document, which advises that flats should receive 5 sq.m of private amenity space per 1-2 person unit plus 1 sq.m for each additional occupant.

For these reasons, we consider that the Proposed Expansion would result in severe detrimental impacts to amenity and should be rejected.

Parking

In respect of parking, whilst we acknowledge there is now a favour towards car-free development, we would question how realistic that is in a suburban area such as Pitshanger Village. We consider it highly unlikely that none of the occupiers of the new units would own a car. We submit that the Transport Statement (prepared by YES Engineering Group Limited) accompanying the application has critical flaws in its analysis and consequently fails to reflect the negative impact the Proposed Expansion would have to the already stretched parking in the area. First, it is based on 2011 Census data, which indicated that a third of residents commute by car, thus the Transport Statement states that *"it is anticipated that 17 residents will travel to work by car so there will be a demand for 17 parking spaces."* This completely fails to take into account that many residents in the area commute by public transport (walking, cycling or taking a bus to local railway/tube stations) whilst leaving their cars at home during the day.

Secondly, the analysis is based on usage in the early hours of the morning and uses that as support for saying the demand for parking is low. The analysis should have taken into account parking issues during daytime, where the chances of finding a space on Pitshanger Lane are small and where parking in the surrounding roads is also limited. An additional 17 cars, let alone more, would add pressure to the current parking shortage. As there is no CPZ in Pitshanger Lane, the suggestion that new residents should be prevented from parking their cars in the area is illogical and unenforceable.

Accessibility

No disabled parking will be provided as a direct result of the proposed units not being designed to be accessible by all, including those in wheelchairs (as there are no lifts to the upper storeys). This goes directly against London Plan Policy 3.8 (Housing Choice) which advises that Londoners should have a genuine choice of homes and that 10% of new dwellings should meet Building Regulation M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.

Affordable Housing

It is understood that only 9 of the 44 proposed units are to be affordable. This falls significantly short of the council's target of providing 50% affordable housing. Ealing Development Management Policy 3A (Affordable Housing) states that affordable housing will be sought on all developments capable of providing 10 or more residential units, which will be negotiated on the basis of a 50% provision at a 60/40 split of social or affordable rented accommodation to intermediate provision.

We therefore consider this another reason that should merit refusal of the application for the Proposed Expansion.

Heritage

There are two groups of 'Building or Façade of Group Value' and non-designated heritage:

- a. 62 to 82 Pitshanger Lane forming a 2-storey terrace of shops with elaborate terracotta gables and dressings in a Dutch style and
- b. 108-124 Pitshanger Lane forms an early 20th century shopping parade and is situated near the site of the Proposed Expansion to the north east.

Ealing Development Management Plan 7C says "Harm to any heritage asset should be avoided. Proposals that seek to cause harm should be exceptional in relation to the significance of the asset and be clearly and convincingly justified in line with national policy." We consider that the proposed plans for Kenmure Mansions are contrary to this policy: they would harm the non-designated heritage assets, in particular 62-82 Pitshanger Lane, due to the overbearing nature of the design.

Density of units

Policy 3.4 of the London Plan "Optimising Housing Potential" requires development proposals to take into account local context, design and transport capacity as well as social infrastructure in order to optimise housing output for different types of locations within the relevant density range (having regard to the Density Matrix table 3.2 of the London Plan). The Planning and Policy document quotes the expectation that a predominantly suburban area would expect a maximum density of approximately 200hr/ha whereas a predominantly urban area would expect densities of up to 450hr/h.

The application argues that the site of the Proposed Expansion, being located on a primary shopping frontage, could be considered as urban. Pitshanger Lane is a traditional high street comprising a mixture of over 50 independent shops and residential accommodation and is surrounded by purely residential streets. It is not a primary shopping site. We would suggest that other parts of Ealing, for example the Broadway Centre and the Waterglades Centre, are proper examples of primary shopping frontage, given that all the units therein are shopping units.

The planning and policy document quotes from the Planning Officer's letter of 10 August: "the immediate built environment of the area should be classed as 'Suburban'. The Public Accessibility Level (PTAL) of the site is 2 and 1B (where 1 is low and 6 is high) which represents a relatively poor level of accessibility." We fail to see how the area can be classified as urban in one context, and moreover it is clear that the site is in a suburban area. For that reason, the Proposed Expansion fails to meet the density requirements for a predominantly suburban area.

In conclusion, for the reasons outlined above, we fail to see how the council can support a proposal which is in direct conflict with a number of key London Plan and Local Plan policies and consider that, should this application be granted, it will set a dangerous precedent which will result in substandard housing development coming forward for approval. It should also be taken into account the serious strain caused by adding 44 dwellings on the already stretched local infrastructure.

As was the case with The Lindens Queen Walk application, in which the council accepted that approval would set a "undesirable precedent" and "unwelcome development", we respectfully request that the council give serious consideration to the significant and permanent detrimental impact it would have on Pitshanger Lane, the existing residents and businesses and hence refuse this application.

With best wishes

Debbie Edwards (by email)
Pitshanger Community Association (Chair)

Cc: Steve Pound MP, Councillor Julian Bell (Council leader), Councillor Shital Manro (Chair of Planning Committee), Alex Jackson (Planning), Cleveland Ward Councillors Linda Burke, Carlo Lusuardi and Sitarah Anjum.

www.pitshanger.org.uk

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