



The Heath & Hampstead Society

The Society examines all Planning Applications relating to Hampstead, and assesses them for their impact on conservation and on the local environment.

Ex Police Station, Rosslyn Hill NW3

OBJECTION to application no.2019/2375/P

10.06.2019.

This is the second application, by the Dept for Education (DfE), to convert into a school for young children a Listed Grade II ex Police Station and Magistrates Court, four stories in height, on a busy polluted classified road, the A502, at a busy junction,

Reasons for our objection are based on Camden`s Local Plan;

G1 - Location of Growth – the proposal is in an unsatisfactory location;

A1 - Impact of Development – the proposal will impact deleteriously on the area and its people

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10 - Transport 10.3, Health and Well-being,- the children will be seriously affected by pollution
& **10.4, Air Pollution,-** traffic and pollution will be increased by the proposal

CC4 – Air Quality, - a serious problem in Rosslyn Hill

D2 - Heritage, Conservation Area, Listed Building – the building is not suitable for a school.
- the conversion spoils the existing Magistrates Court and does not enhance this fine listed building.

Commentary

Large sums of State money have already been spent on this proposed new school and much more will be needed to successfully convert the Listed building. This government expenditure is taking place at a time when existing state schools are being deprived of funding, and in a location where the existing schools are finding difficulty in filling their places – reducing even further their funding.

- 1) The absurdity of this situation is made worse by the fact that the proposed new school is not in the area that it serves – thus unnecessarily increasing the distance that these small children will have to travel, in a hilly area, but also increasing the chance that in inclement weather cars will inevitably be used to ferry them to and from school.
- 2) Even more absurd, the site chosen is already highly polluted by traffic and at a potentially dangerous junction which will be made worse by the inevitable increase of traffic and the parking of parents cars, school coaches, delivery vehicles in a junction where parking is impossible without causing obstruction and reduced visibility – particularly for small children crossing the busy roads.
- 3) The Heath & Hampstead have been campaigning against the large increase in schools and pupil numbers in Hampstead for the past twenty years and frequently the school applicants

will make extravagant claims and plans to reduce parents taking their children to and from school. These have rarely worked for long. It is inevitable that parents with young children in bad weather, or are late, will use their cars to get quickly to school.

- 4) A Government recommendation was recently made that new schools should not be located near main roads due to air pollution, and for many years now Schools have been advising parents to use unpolluted routes to School when walking or cycling. Getting to this school (outside the area it serves) will inevitable mean walking along Rosslyn Hill, the A502, heavily polluted, as is most of Camden as admitted in the Local Plan (CC4) and shown in a recent survey by the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum when a measurement of 56.02 micrograms per cu.m. were measured - well above the maximum advisable level – and very dangerous to young growing lungs.

The same Survey showed that even in the centre of Hampstead Heath the air was shown to have a high level of air pollution at 26mcg./cu.m.(still dangerous)

The proposed school playground close to polluted roads is likely to also suffer from high air pollution. (Perhaps the children would be safer playing indoors!)

- 5) The serious problem of playground noise affecting the very near houses on Downshire Hill will not be solved by the proposed screens.
- 6) The ex Police Station is a very fine Listed building that does not easily convert into a school.
 - a) The Magistrates Court and its fine joinery is spoilt – the section drawings appear to show a solid false ceiling over this fine top-lit space –which would be totally unacceptable
 - b) The interior lay-out is utilitarian and does not match the fine quality of the exterior. The existing retained rear extensions remain and a chance to improve them has not been taken
 - c) The ramp suggested below the front elevation spoils this admirable elevation and should be omitted – level access to the lift through the Downshire Hill entrance door could provide a satisfactory level access.
 - d) The existing flat roofs at upper levels appear to have a railing around them, if so, in order to prevent noise and overlooking to adjacent gardens and houses –the railings should be omitted and a condition applied to prevent access to the roofs
 - e) The classroom for Year 2 receives poor natural light, and other classrooms with the existing retained small windows are not well lit.
 - f) The interior corridors have many changes in level – not satisfactory for small children and totally unacceptable for the disabled.
- 7) Over previous years schools in Hampstead have inevitably increased their student numbers – often without requiring or seeking planning permission. We are concerned that, if permission is given, this school, or a future owner, will seek to increase its pupil numbers within the generous floor area of this application – without needing planning permission – making worse the pollution and traffic problems that already are a serious problem in Hampstead.

For all of the above reasons this application should be refused - it should be in another more suitable building and in a location within the area it serves for the sake of the children and all those living or working in Hampstead.