



# PEACE SHATTERED IN QUIET BRIGHTON MEWS

In the autumn of 2021, planning permission was sought to convert two dilapidated hotels on Kings Road into one smart new one: BH2021/02932.

There were no objections from the Heritage Team at B&H City Council. English Heritage saw no major loss of heritage fabric.

The City's own Conservation Advisory Group (CAG) welcomed the renovation of the buildings.

Why then did CAG recommend refusal of the application? Why then were there so many objections to the application?

Clearly CAG and local residents live in the real world.

CAG objected to some extent on grounds of conservations: *"The ugly, monolith, square block, spa building is completely out of character with the area."*

However, far outweighing this were objections as early as September 2021, to the way servicing a large hotel in a narrow mews street would affect local residents: for example:

- "The hotel and spa entrance on Queensbury Mews, a relatively quiet place, with all the noise and disruption this entails, is unacceptable. There would also be high footfall, deliveries and refuse collection within a tight turning space. Vehicular access, where standard vehicles (cars and taxis) can hardly pass and the larger vehicles would find it impossible." (CAG);
- "I have great concerns over noise from the proposed rear which includes deliveries, laundry drops, spa guests, external terrace and hotel arrivals/departures towing cases on wheels along the road 7 days of the week plus guests returning back to the hotel of the night/early hours." (local resident);
- "Queensbury Mews is a tiny and almost entirely residential street and the addition of a hotel entrance and large delivery area will cause noise and disruption to a currently peaceful area. Large vehicles will not be able to negotiate the narrow street and ninety degree corners and frequent deliveries and taxi drop offs will create noise and pollution at all times of day and night." (local resident).
- All this has come true - and worse. Residents in Queensbury Mews have been battling for well over three years with noise and disruption to their daily lives. Construction work is (and has been) a great nuisance, but it will eventually end.

Even worse, and apparently never ending, is the disruption from constant delivery and collection vehicles to the hotel – which is not even fully operative yet.

Discussions with the managers of the hotel have led to a little (very little) improvement in the mews. However, to limit the movement of large vehicles in the mews, the hotel managers have suggested that vans park in Regency Square – usually on double yellow lines or in residents parking spaces. This has resulted in the noise of rubbish bins and wheeled pallets being dragged from to and from the hotel along the mews. This is clearly not a solution.

Several suppliers have found their own solution: they reverse illegally from Regency Square, with loud warning **“Vehicle Reversing”** beeps echoing along the mews, to reach the hotel.

On the technical side, the Council failed residents in two ways:

- Firstly, no “Planning Notices” were posted in Queensbury Mews where most of the affected neighbours live;
- Secondly, the application was not discussed at the Planning committee of 1 December 2021. This happened despite the mandatory stipulation that when there are “5 or more individual letters of objections if the recommendation is to approve” the application must be discussed in committee.

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/how-planning-decision-made>

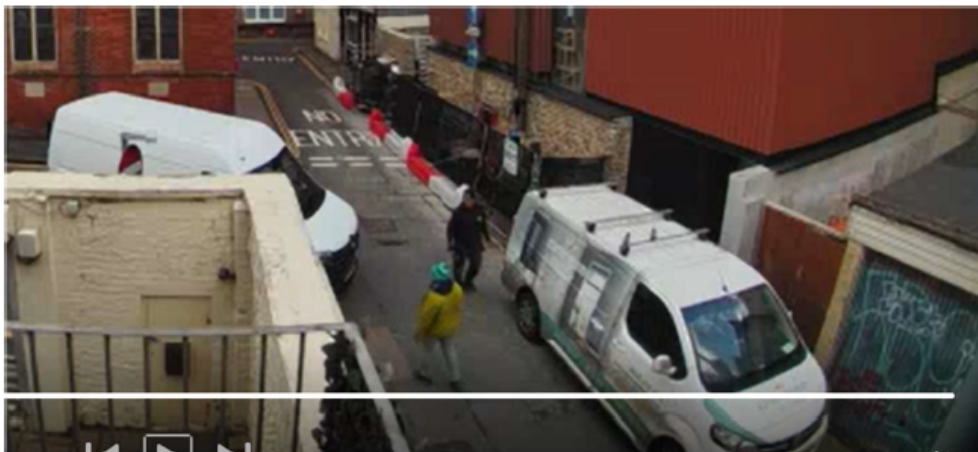
The Planning Committee found some wiggle room to get out of this obligation to discuss the application as page 83 of the Agenda for the meeting on 1 December 2021 shows:

“5.2. Objections relating to highway safety and traffic issues are noted, however are not material considerations in relation to a listed building consent application” (page 83 of the Agenda for the 1 December meeting).

What is planning for if it is not to protect the residents of Brighton and Hove from noise, disruption and deterioration of their environment? Our local council, in its eagerness to get more business rates and to improve the look of the promenade, has sacrificed the peace and well-being of its own residents.



Vans blocking Queensbury Mews and private cars left waiting



This is the problem when two small vans are trying to deliver.



Vans block the pavement and park on double yellow lines



"The monolith" as predicted by CAG – and builders rubbish that has lingered for nearly two years.