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**Subject:** Comment on planning application 2023/0270/P  
**Attachments:** 20230318\_165338.jpg; 20230318\_165400.jpg



I am the owner and resident of 56 Rochester Road and am writing to object to the proposed planning application at 26-28 Rochester place.

The proposed development would impact not only ourselves personally as residents but also our neighbours, community and the neighbouring Rochester Terrace Conservation Area more generally. The proposed height of proposed extension completely changes the character and impact of the existing property in a detrimental way and the manner in which the developers have presented their case understates the loss of amenity to the building's immediate neighbours, especially, but not only, in terms of the loss of privacy and overlooking and the loss of sunlight in our gardens.

The floor plans and room designations in the analysis of daylight and sunlight also contain multiple inaccuracies which result in the actual impact being miscalculated and understated.

The application claims that the building is not tall, and the new extended height responds to the adjacent Camden Courtyards residential complex. However, that other building has no significant impact on our amenity or direct visual relationship with our properties.

#### **Impact on our amenity**

The proximity of the buildings to our house and others on Rochester Road has a very significant impact on our (a) visual privacy and overlooking (b) sunlight, daylight and artificial lighting levels (c) overshadowing and outlook (d) noise and vibration levels. Camden, and in particular the Rochester Conservation Area is a beautiful place to live and until recently had stunning tree density (see below). The high level of amenity and quality of life will be impacted by the proposed extension in a significant and negative way.

**It is also important to note that the original permission for the building had already resulted in a very significant loss of amenity to our properties due to the increased height and the change in use from a warehouse to residential use, and the impact on our available sunlight, daylight and privacy.**

1. **Visual Privacy and Overlooking-** The properties on Rochester Road, Wilmot Place and Rochester Mews ("the Residential Properties"), which includes my house, will suffer significant loss of privacy. The proposed extension seeks to add two stories to the building with added balconies. Both the interior and exterior spaces of our property and the other Residential Properties will be significantly more overlooked as a result. Our living rooms and kitchen are at the back of our property which will be directly affected by this. Further, the residents of the new developed will be able to look into the windows at the back of the houses and into the area of the garden closest to the house. I attach a photo taken from the rear of my property to illustrate the extent to which the proposal will impact my own property which will be overlooked by the additional windows balconies and terrace

We note that when permission to develop the building was granted in the first place (for Application Ref: 2007/0524/P), one of the decisive factors was the fact that there was significant tree coverage on the boundary

between the residential properties and the back of the building. In the original planning decision, it was decided that as there was considerable tree cover in the rear gardens of the potentially overlooked properties, no unreasonable overlooking was expected from the balconies. This was safeguarded by the fact that because the development would have an adverse effect on the existing trees and the fact that the Council wanted to limit the negative impact that would have on the amenities (see reason 14), a condition requiring details of the means of ensuring no significant harm to the trees was imposed.

Unfortunately, in reality the safeguarding has since been rendered entirely ineffective. The owners of the building at 26-28 Rochester Place illegally felled a very large tree at the foot of the garden of 57 Rochester Road which massively increased our loss of privacy. Last year the developers of the existing building made applications to remove the boundary trees ( Application Nos. 2022/3175/T, 2022/0378/T, 2022/0377/T, 2022/0375/T). This was because it was said that the trees were affecting the structure of the boundary wall between the existing building and the gardens at the rear of the Residential Properties. The beautiful mature trees which provided a full screen from the majority of the balconies and a significant amount of privacy to the Residential Properties have now been removed and it will take decades for the new trees to grow. The impact of the removal of the trees has been detrimental to our privacy as it has left us our neighbours exposed to the eyes of the residents and offices of the existing building. It should also be noted that the building's insurers have rejected the suggestion that the trees played any role in the problems with the wall. By increasing the development by two stories we will suffer being significantly more overlooked and our homes will become significantly less private as a result.

In respect of our property specifically, the section of the development which is directly at the back of our property is actually significantly closer to our property and overshadows our garden and property in a much more impactful way than the rest of the building which is set back from the boundary wall. The impact of the extension to this part of the building will therefore be even greater.

2. **Overshadowing and outlook** – the new proposal will be very oppressive in its relation to us and will significantly affect the outlook from our ground floor living room in particular (see photo). It will also cause significant overshadowing. The clear overbearing and/or dominating effect is detrimental to the enjoyment of our property. Without the tree that was at 57 Rochester Road, there is no coverage, and the visibility of the building is now 24/7.
3. **Sunlight, daylight and artificial lighting levels** – There can be no doubt that adding two storeys will have a negative impact on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing. We already live in quite a congested area building height wise and the amount of light that we get is already extremely limited due to overlooking by other buildings (including the existing development). The impact of the additional two stories will significantly reduce the light that our property receives. The proposed development is not in accordance with the most recent guidance published by the Building Research Establishment (currently the Building Research Establishment's Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice 2011).
  - a. **Daylight** – the daylight that is received inside our property especially in the winter months is already limited. The building blocks quite a lot of the light especially in the lower level of the property. If the development is allowed to be extended, then the daylight will be significantly reduced. The distance of the development from our property does not negate this issue because the building is already significantly higher than our house and overbearing. Daylight is an important amenity and significantly affects our mental health.
  - b. **Sunlight** - Currently the existing development blocks most of the morning sunlight as the sun comes over the building. In March there is less than 2 hours of sunlight already. With the proposed new development we will lose morning sunlight for half the year. Again, sunlight is an important amenity and significantly affects our mental health.
  - c. **Artificial lighting levels** - The artificial lighting levels will increase by double at night due to the fact that the flats are intended for residents and the proposal intends to double the number of floors. The proposal for a fully glazed top floor and a "glazed lantern" on top of the building will create light pollution in the surrounding area at night. Given the removal of the trees this is impacted significantly in the evenings. Our bedrooms which are at the back of the property would be impacted by this.

- d. **Noise and vibration** - The **noise** from residents of the building is already significant. The residents use the balconies a lot and barbeque on their balconies which sit at the rear of the existing building. With two extra storeys that noise will only increase and further disrupt our enjoyment of our property. This is particularly so on the end of the building directly behind our property because the building is much closer.

#### **Impact on the character of the area**

The proposed development, by reason of its height, bulk, mass, footprint and detailed design, would be detrimental to the streetscape and the character and appearance of the neighbouring Rochester Terrace Conservation Area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies. We are concerned about the appearance of the design of the proposed application as it is not in accordance with the requirements of policy D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 and policy 2 of the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016.

The proposed design is out character, setting, context, form and scale with the neighbouring buildings. Although the character and design of the building was originally found to be in keeping with the character and design of residential properties in the Rochester Terrace Conservation Area, this would no longer be the case if the extension is permitted because the proposed new height alters the character and impact of the building on the area.

The Rochester Terrace Conservation Area has wider historic beauty and value which is worth preserving. Whilst the existing building sits a bit more inconspicuously due to its height and size, the proposed two storey addition will become more visible and imposing not only from up close, but also from a distance, including from the Rochester Terrace gardens. This will significantly alter the development's impact on the character of the immediate area and will alter the skyline. The application claims that the building is not tall and the new extended height responds to the adjacent Camden Courtyards residential complex. However, that building is of a totally different character and has no visual impact from the properties on Rochester Road, Wilmot Place and Rochester Mews. The proposed new size and height of the extension will make the building unsightly, oppressive and totally out of keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

Further, I am concerned that the proposed new design will have a negative impact on the Rochester Conservation Area. The Conservation Area has been described as cohesive and compact with architectural integrity and charm that survives overall with some minor changes. The guidance is very strict on the impact of new extensions in the conservation area. Given the proximity of the development to the conservation area, the impact of the proposed changes will be significant and not in accordance with the guidance.

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