9 Chalcot Crescent Primrose Hill NW1 8YE

**Response to Planning Application No. 2023/2804P**

**For 12 Chalcot Crescent Primrose Hill NW1 8YD**

My wife and I have been residents of Chalcot Crescent since 1979, living at No.9, one of the half-dozen dwellings that lie directly opposite No.12 and which, somewhat artfully, are Not included in the presentation photographs taken from the third floor of No.12. This neatly avoids the matter of just how close these opposing terraces actually are…

I mention this because we knew the owner of No.12, Philip Pollock, who was responsible for this aesthetically atrocious roof extension: and it is the third-floor front elevation which is the only part of the current planning proposal with which we take issue here.

The existing extension was originally denied front fenestration in the 1960’s, and again in a later proposal in the 1980’s, owing to the very real impact upon the privacy of the front bedroom floors of the houses across this narrow street – particularly those which are so disingenuously omitted form the contextual photographs mentioned above, ie Nos. 5,7,9,11,13, and 15. If the third floor terrace of No.12 is used socially late at night, as it was earlier this year – and the proposed refurbishment makes that more probable – there is also the issue of late-night noise nuisance to the whole of the echoing crescent, at bedroom level. This is a matter which should be given greater consideration.

Be that as it may, the proposed alteration to the third-floor front elevation has, strangely, missed the opportunity to diminish the horror of the existing extension when it might simply have applied a similar solution to the front as OPEN London propose for the rear. At present, there are vertiginous flanking walls, built upon the No.10 and No.14 party walls right up to the front stuccoed elevation of the terrace, which serve no function or architectural purpose (access to the flat roof could easily be managed in an alternative fashion). It is, in fact, these monstrous existing structures, looming over the street, which so mar the compositional unity of the Crescent from ground level. A simple remodelling to a mansard profile, sloping back and upwards to abut the chimneys on each side, would considerably reduce the negative aspect of this unsightly 1960’s addition.

Next we come to the replacement of the existing third-floor timber cladding which, it has to be agreed, is totally anachronistic. The developers, however, here propose replacing it with stucco which, while superficially matching the historic treatment of Burden’s terrace elevation, would not be as suitable a treatment as that proposed for the rear elevation of the same floor, which is excellent: that is slate-hung in the manner of a mansard roof. This extended floor is Not, and Never was, part of the existing terrace elevation – indeed, it is set back some one-and-a-half metres – so to treat it not as roof but as part of the historic elevational fabric would be a greatly negative “impact on heritage”. Put simply, the grammar is inappropriate, or misapplied, as is the suggestion that reprising the first-floor balcony-iron on top of the historic elevation entablature which unites the whole terrace. Here, a simple horizontal steel bar with, if necessary, glass infill below would serve safety without the bizarre appearance of misplaced and incongruous elements, no matter how “period” they may superficially appear to be in written reference.

In summary, the original 1960’s decision to permit the roof-extension to No.12 was deplorable, and has been a blight on this otherwise immaculately preserved, blitz-surviving, London crescent ever since. If changes are to be made, let them diminish the harm and restore some notion of harmony, but also show consideration to the present and future inhabitants of the Crescent who are left to bear the consequences.

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