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2024/1558/P	Piers and Hilary Murray Hill	20/07/2024 18:56:13	COMMNT	Planning Application 2024/1558P Comments Dated 20 July 2024

From:
Piers and Hilary Murray Hill
12 Jeffrey's Place
London NW1 9PP

OBJECTION

Please read the submission below in conjunction with our 21 February 2024 and 11 May 2024 emails of objection to the applicant's similar proposals in their Planning Application 2023/5081/P.

1. Overview

We and many other neighbouring residents, local councillors, the Conservation Advisory Committee and TRACT, most strongly object to the proposed alterations to the rear elevation of this property, 19 objections having already been made to the council.

Jeffrey's Place is in a Conservation Area (CA), and the CA Statement puts these 1970s houses in the same quality bracket as statutorily listed buildings, such as the 19th-century properties in Jeffrey's Street. As the previous owner of our house, architect Peter Clapp RIBA FCSD, said in his 27 February 2024 email objection to the original planning application 2023/5081/P, 'It is very sad to see how this remarkable example of high-density housing is being steadily eroded by inappropriate purchasers and their architects.'

Lisa Shell Architects Planning Application Heritage Statement Summary says, 'the proposed alterations ... have been designed to ... protect the amenity of neighbours.' This is simply not true. 'Amenity' means 'a desirable or useful feature or facility of a building.' Many neighbours of No 13 Jeffrey's Place have made it completely clear to the council that they do not consider the rear elevation plans as either desirable or useful to anyone except the owner of No 13.

Note also that Policy A1 of the council's Local Plan, as quoted in section 4 of the Delegated Report for Application 2023/5081/P, 'seeks to ensure that development does not cause adverse amenity impacts on neighbours in terms of ... privacy and overlooking, noise, vibration', while Policy A4 states that the council 'will not grant permission for developments with unacceptable noise impacts.'

Furthermore, the Conservation Area Impact Assessment, quoted by Lisa Shell Architects, says, 'the 1970s terrace makes a positive contribution to the Jeffrey's Place Conservation Area and so any alteration must [my own italics] be shown to preserve or enhance its special character and quality.'

The revised plans in this planning application for the rear elevation and the garden clearly do neither. They will lead inevitably to a diminution of privacy, an increase in noise, and therefore reduce the quality of life for all close neighbours, so surely must be refused.

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If they are not, what point is there in having Conservation Areas at all if CA guidelines and the council's own planning policies are not being followed and enforced, and if valid unanimous objections from affected neighbours, architects, councillors and the CA Advisory Committee are ignored?

2. Rear Elevation

We do not agree with elements of the council's Delegate Report for Planning Application 2023/5081/P, Clause 4, which relate to Residential Amenity. For example, the statement that 'there are numerous examples of other balconies to the rear of properties in this terrace, including at 12, 15, 16 and 18 Jeffrey's Place, and as such any increase in overlooking towards neighbouring properties as part of the proposed works would not be significant in the existing context where mutual overlooking of neighbouring rear elevations and gardens already occurs' does not take into account the size and function of the 'balconies' (see points about Planting Shelf in Second Floor section below), nor the lack of permitted first floor 'balconies'. The ones visible from the street in Prowse Place are all at second floor level, which have less impact on the neighbouring gardens.

The Report continues in 4.5, 'there would be no detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity from the proposed development in terms of loss of ... privacy nor in terms of noise disturbance....' Taking into account all the points made in this and all the other well made and carefully considered objections to this plan, how can this be true?

Third Floor:

We believe it would be unprecedented for a property in this unique row of 1970s CA houses to have three outside balcony spaces added to the rear elevation. And the council's Chris Smith emailed, 'we would however resist the installation of a rear balcony into the uninterrupted roofline within this CA.' This new planning application professes 'to formally test this position'. This is another example of the owner of No 13 pushing for every possible concession for his/her benefit but to the detriment of all neighbours. To have a social outdoor space for people to be able to overlook neighbouring gardens in this way is just unacceptable to everyone affected.

Second Floor:

Lisa Shell Architect's Heritage Statement for this new planning application states 'the shallow balconies at first and second floor level to the rear will not be sufficiently large for sitting out and the obscured balustrades will ensure that the privacy enjoyed by the occupants of the house on Jeffrey's Street [no mention of those next door in Jeffrey's Place!] will not be affected.' Again, this is not true. The balcony shown on their plan will be extended to the full extent of the adjoining brickwork, so will be over 90cm deep, with enough room for chairs and for people to sit outside -- I have measured and tried this on a chair.

We bought our property with a permitted 50cm-deep 'planting shelf'--not a balcony--in place outside the enlarged, sliding window on the second floor. There there isn't enough space to put a chair or table on this shelf. Its small footprint discourages going outside and overlooking neighbours, and it is far enough above the neighbouring gardens not to allow us to overhear conversations. Our balustraded planting shelf is basically a safety measure to stop us falling into the garden, not an inviting space to sit & overlook our neighbours, as the

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current planning application would provide for No 13. Why is it designed to be larger than ours unless the plan is to give enough space for people to sit and/or stand outside?

Therefore, if permission is going to be granted for an enlarged second-floor window for No 13 on the basis of the No 12 precedent, then we feel very strongly that the dimensions of the external work should be as per our planting shelf, not as per their latest planning application. The original planning application stated that the additional outside space is wanted for planting, so make it a planting shelf not a balcony.

First Floor:

This is the element of the planning application we feel most strongly about. There is no precedent for a first-floor balcony or planting shelf at this height that is visible from the street in Prowse Place. And it would be destroy our privacy whenever we sit out in our expensively and newly refurbished garden, with people listening to our every word while being able to overlook us from a few feet away. From our point of view, this is the planning application's most egregious example of 'adverse amenity impacts on neighbours in terms of privacy and overlooking, noise...'. Council Policy A4 states that the council will not grant permission for such plans, and we fully expect the council to adhere to its own policies.

3. Garden

The installation of an ASHP for this type of property is not only inappropriate but will also create noise and vibration for surrounding properties, especially neighbouring gardens.

Architect and previous owner of No 12 Jeffrey's Place, Peter Clapp RIBA FCSD, expertly highlighted such inappropriateness in his 27 February 2024 letter to Case Office Daren Zuk:

'Heat pumps only work effectively when you have a large, insulated, ground floor concrete slab with underfloor heating. Otherwise they require excessively large radiators because of the low flow temperatures. No such radiators are indicated on the drawings [this is still the case in this new application]. Furthermore, they only work at a maximum coefficient of 3:1 in cold conditions, and as electricity in the UK is three times the cost of gas are simply not cost effective for the considerably higher expenditure. They also, like air conditioning condensers, are a constant source of noise irritation to neighbours, and are therefore only suited to remote locations.'

We have recently spent nearly £20,000 improving the hard landscaping of our garden so that we can enjoy a beautifully designed outdoor oasis of calm. This will be ruined by having the irritating hum of an outdoor ASHP just a few feet away.

4. Internal Demolitions

We are very concerned to see that Lisa Shell Architects' radical Revisions/Issue Proposed Demolition Plan shows most of the internal walls of the property are proposed for demolition. As we share a party wall with No

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13 Jeffrey's Place so are part of the same building structure, we are not only extremely worried about the structural integrity of such a plan, but also do not want many weeks and possibly months of intolerably loud noise and vibration that such comprehensive demolition work would create. For essential safety reasons we would expect the council to require a full structural surveyor's report on the safety of such wholesale demolition work before permission is considered. As we could be severely adversely affected if the demolition work creates structural problems, we would expect to see such a report before any such work is started. Otherwise months of severe anxiety and stress would ensue as we worry about the structural integrity of our newly decorated home.

5. Conclusion

We ask that the council listens to the reasonable and justified concerns of residents, councilors, associations and experts expressed in all the objections it has received in 2024. Please focus on the detail of these objections and do not grant planning permission for elements of this proposal which will adversely affect the quality of life for neighbouring residents and the appearance of the Renton & Welch terrace, detracting from the appearance of this historic Conservation Area.
