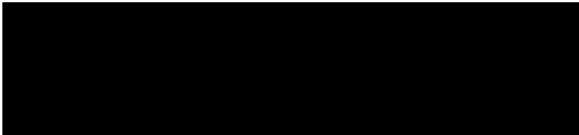


33 Spencer Rise  
London  
NW5 1AR



Cllr Heather Johnson (Chair of Planning  
Cttee)  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE



15 August 2024

Dear Cllr Johnson (& Ms Smith)

**2024/2931/P - 31 Spencer Rise**  
**Ground floor and part first floor rear extension with green roof, enlargement of existing dormer, alterations to front elevation windows**

I wish to **object** most strongly to the above application. Whilst there may be limited grounds on which to refuse the application from a strategic point of view, my main concerns relate to the huge impact this will have on the 'amenity' of my own property and my own well being, principally on matters of light, views and privacy. I understand that there are planning policies which take this aspect of a proposal into account.

I moved to my house just over 10 years ago. At the time, No 33 was in a condition far more neglected than that of No 31. However, I recognised the historic value of the house and its small role in maintaining the character of this conservation area. Consequently, prior to submitting a planning application for works, I engaged in discussion with the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee for advice. This resulted in the following which affected the exterior of the building:

- reconstruction of the dilapidated dormer ('pulled back' from the original dormer and at a smaller size, than the original consented application)
- reconstruction of the roof to more or less its original form, without seeking a huge expansion
- a modest infill of the side return, rather than a large rear ground floor extension, thereby largely preserving the historical garden footprint

- the side return of a form which complements and respects the ground floor aspect
- retention of the original sash window structure at the rear of the house (rather than French doors extending across the original house)
- restoring the front door with an original Victorian door and researching the most appropriate stained glass for the same
- installing flush roof skylights to the rear, as well as front, of the property (planning only required this to the front)

In addition, other more discrete internal features were installed:

- specialist glazing was used in order to create replacement sash windows with the same 'depth' as the original (which were completely rotten) and compliant with building regs
- reclaimed original Victorian pitched pine floorboards were restored to all parts of the house (except for the toilets etc)
- the main rooms were restored to an original Victorian form, complete with skirting and plaster coving (as good as) matching that of the original
- all the original fireplaces were retained and restored, as well as the original marble surrounds
- unilaterally, low energy lighting was used throughout (this was not a planning or building control requirement)
- a bat box was integrated (not externally mounted) within the brickwork to the rear of the building
- solar panels were installed to the roof in a way which respects the roofscape and heritage of the area

Indeed, shortly after the house was renovated, it was used as a 'demonstration' house for Hampstead Transition Towns, as an example of prioritising sustainability with heritage in a renovation context.

The reason I have gone into the above in some detail, is to (a) contrast the proposed development next door and (b) demonstrate how the efforts that have been put into undertaking the most sympathetic restoration, are potentially to be undermined by the insensitive approach suggested in the enlargement of No 31.

Taking each element of the proposal in turn

#### *The extension of the dormer*

There is no issue in principle in extending the dormer, provided it is undertaken in a sensitive manner. However, **only its width should be increased** - its northern most extent needs to remain as current: The original dormer at No 33 benefitted from very large windows to the flank, providing a 180° view of the wider environs. In order to reduce the impact upon the roofscape, not only was the new (ie now current) dormer at No 33 pulled back' from the northern most extent of the original (see plans '207 R112 P3 - 2nd floor plan proposed' & '207 012 P0 - 2nd floor plan existing' respectively) but also the side windows were drastically reduced in size, to create a form more appropriate to a Victorian style. Should the proposed dormer at No 31 be brought forward as suggested, it would eliminate this 'remnant' aspect to the west from which No 33 currently benefits.

### *The first floor extension*

Whilst a number of the houses along Spencer Rise have a 1<sup>st</sup> floor extension that 'projects' to the rear, many of these are of some antiquity (ie contemporaneous with the main part of the dwelling), and created with a symmetry across property boundaries. For example, that which projects to the rear of No 33 is symmetrical with that to No 35. The proposal for No 31 would sit awkwardly within the overall structure of the properties within the vicinity.

More important perhaps, is the impact that this projection would have on light, views and privacy:

Bringing the rear of this floor further to the north would hugely increase the vista from the rear of the building over the garden to No 33, severely compromising the already limited privacy. This would affect both No 29 as well as No 33 (especially during months when the shrubs have shed their leaves), but the effect will be exacerbated at No 33 given that the garden is 'raised'.

In addition, its form would completely block light to the rear bedroom of No 33. It needs to be remembered, both here and in the comments that follow, that the gardens are north-west facing. Consequently, the rear of the properties have a propensity to be on the dark side. This will dramatically affect the natural lighting to the bedroom. As well as the lighting, the vista from the No 33 bedroom will be hugely compromised, eliminating the open view of the adjacent gardens to include the west & south-west, and restricting it to a limited perspective to the north-west. So the overall amenity to the first floor bedroom would be seriously and adversely affected.

As well as the first floor bedroom, the proposed first floor extension would have a significant adverse impact upon light reaching the clearstory windows to the kitchen of No 33, reducing further the light level in what is already quite a dark, north-facing room. In addition it would eliminate much of the view of the upper parts of the trees and sky, which are important in preventing this space as feeling like a 'basement'.

### *The ground floor extension*

Notwithstanding any of the comments below, the north-western limit of the proposed ground floor extension should be reduced in length by some 1.4m, to bring it in line with the extension of No 33. The block drawings and floor plans are somewhat misleading as it identifies my timber 'lean-to' as if it was an integral part of the building<sup>1</sup>.

Whilst about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the proposed extension footprint would occupy the existing garden paving, about 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s would encroach upon the garden. I understand that gardens within densely urban areas such as central London are collectively considered an important part of the city's biodiversity, and the loss of gardens by stealth, from a biodiversity perspective, is now accepted as something that needs to be a material consideration in assessing the application. It may well be that Camdens (amd/or London) policies acknowledge this point.

The proposed ground floor extension would itself have minimal impact upon privacy (as long as it was drawn back to be in line with the end of the No 33 extension - see above).

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<sup>1</sup> The drawing is misleading also as the extent of the lean-to is incorrect: On the plan it is shown as extending 2m from the rear of No 33. This figure should be 2.7m. So if the extension was built as shown, relative to the position of the lean-to, it would be projecting further in to the garden than illustrated

However, even *without* the first floor extension, as designed it would also have a severe adverse impact upon light ingress through the clerestory windows into the kitchen (see proposed rear cross-section shown in Dwg 2024-01-03). It is also likely that the elements of the roof of the ground floor extension will significantly obscure the upward view from the same windows (see the 'small print' marked 'roofglazing' on the 'Proposed Rear Cross Section').

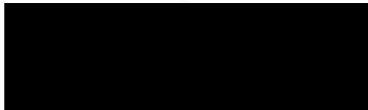
Notwithstanding the above, the plans ('Existing Section' and the proposed rear cross section within 'Proposed Sections') are **substantially incorrect**: They show the clerestory windows of the No 33 extension being **less than half their actual height**. So as it stands, the proposed extension would be **built up against the lower half the windows**. Going by the scale bar on the drawing, the majority of the No 31 extension roof would need to be lowered by some 130cm, for it to be below the bottom of the No 33 windows and for light levels and views not to be affected (that is also assuming that the first floor extension is *not* implemented).

I have not checked the policies relating to light, privacy and amenity, but am guessing that the proposed enlargement of No 31 does not conform to these. As mentioned above, there may also be a policy regarding safeguarding loss of domestic gardens 'by stealth' encroachment of extensions?

I am happy to provide photographs (current or past) of any of the features related to No 33 described above, and would encourage you to undertake a site visit to gain a better understanding of the points I have raised above.

In conclusion, whilst there is potential for the enlargement of living space to No 31, the current plans as submitted would have a significant adverse impact upon the light, views, privacy and amenity of No 33 (and probably No 29). This would need to be addressed prior to any re-submission. I **object** most strongly to the application as it stands.

Yours sincerely



Dr Greg Carson, CEnv