
ANDREW SHAW

26 August 2024

Miriam Baptist
Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London WC1H 8EQ

Dear Ms Baptist,

RE: Planning Application 2024/3069/P – 24 Burgess Hill, NW2 2DA

I am writing to **OBJECT** to certain elements of the above applications on planning grounds, specifically:

- the proposed basement under the existing footprint of the building
- the side infill extension at ground floor, and
- the first floor side extension.

As an immediate neighbour to the property concerned, we are of the view that the proposed changes are inconsistent with Camden Planning Guidance (2021) and will have a serious and negative impact on our standard and quality of living.

Contrary to Camden's Planning guidance, we have not been consulted on the specific plans nor been engaged by any of the Applicant's contractors prior to the application being filed. We are also concerned that some of the drawings may not be accurate.

Our specific objections and reasons are as follows:

- 1. The proposed side infill extension at ground floor and first floor extension will substantially diminish light to the ground level and first floor to the north of our house. It will destroy an important architectural feature and fails to respect the unique character of the neighbourhood. It will negatively change the character of the street and surrounding areas.**

At ground level, the side infill would leave only a few inches between the new wall of the Applicant's house and our ground floor window. This will have a significant impact on our natural light and severely restrict access to our side wall and chimney breast for repairs and maintenance.

We are also concerned that the existing drawings, and the proposed front elevation drawing show a larger gap between our properties than is actually the case.

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At first floor level, the construction of the proposed extension at the front of the property to the front line of the existing garage will further diminish natural light to the ground level window mentioned above. It would completely obscure our first floor window and cut off almost all its available natural light. It would also destroy the important and historic 'stepped' architectural detail which is a feature of houses in the area.

In any event, both the proposed infill and side extension will create a sense of enclosure which doesn't currently exist.

Section 7 of the applicant's Design and Access Statement states:

"The first floor side extension has been set back from the front façade of the building to appear subservient. There is already a first floor side extension and the proposed extension will sit further forward on the plot and have no impact on the obscure glazed side facing angled windows on the neighboring dwelling."

This is categorically untrue as can be seen from the CGI of the proposed front elevation of the house in the same Design and Access Statement (reproduced below). This clearly shows that the side windows of our house would be completely obscured with minimal natural light able to reach them. Additionally, the gap between our house and the Applicant's would be reduced to a matter of centimeters.

In general, the houses on this section of Burgess Hill (part of the group of streets collectively known as "The Hocrofts") have a distinct pattern and are built in a certain style. They each have side windows allowing natural daylight, and they are each clearly detached with a gap large enough for access and/or a pathway.

The original design of the Applicant's house, like many others in the area, left the garage as a single storey to let natural light reach the side windows of its neighbour. The proposed infill and extension does not respect and preserve these established historic patterns.

In summary, we are of the view that the proposed infill and side extension is not compliant with Camden Planning Guidance (2021) Relevant Side Extension guidance's requirement to:

- respect and duly consider amenity of adjacent occupier with regard to daylight
- be designed to not cause overbearing or overshadowing to...the interior of their [neighbour's] home
- respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space, and
- protect significant gaps.

2. The Proposed boundary line encroaches on our land and therefore can't be implemented as its not in the ownership of the property making the application.

The photographs below show the exceptionally narrow space between our house and the Applicant's. In practice, this currently works as the two houses have different and complementary side profiles and height levels. The Applicant's garden shed has been installed on his property, but the roofline overhangs our land, as does his fence. The proposed infill and extension would remove this 'jigsaw' which allows in natural light, creates a sense of enclosure, and leave no gap between our properties. This would also make access for repairs and maintenance impossible for us as well as the Applicant.

3. The area has a history of subsidence, and the proposed development is likely to create further instability to ground conditions prejudicing not only our house but others in the vicinity.

The Basement Impact Assessment report ("BIA") cannot have been conducted properly as it claims that there is no evidence of previous subsidence in the area. The BIA confirms this assessment was done via a "desk study and walk over". Very basic enquiries, including of neighbours, would have brought to light other recent cases of subsidence on our side of the street. If this basic due diligence was not done, it calls into question the reliability of the engineer's conclusion that the risk is 'moderate'.

The documents submitted by the Applicant make multiple references to the land being flat. Although properties on Burgess Hill are level with the street at the front, Ranulf Road lies to the south of the properties and descends steeply downhill to the west. To keep level, the gardens in Burgess Hill are artificially raised at some height above those in Ranulf Road. As a result, there is vertical drop of 3-4m from the rear of numbers 22 to 26 Burgess Hill to the property behind at 6 Ranulf Road. The rear walls of numbers 22 to 26 Burgess Hill have structurally critical retaining walls and there is no evidence in the submitted reports that this has been taken into account.

Our garden contains a carbon fibre swimming pool with associated underground pipework. As well as being concerned about damage to our house, both the carbon fibre shell and underground pipework are very sensitive to movement. A hairline crack in the carbon fibre shell, or air leak in the underground pipework, can cause significant water leakage and would require our garden to be dug up to be repaired.

For above reasons, we are particularly concerned about the size and scale of the proposed basement extension which, combined with the known history of subsidence, will inevitably cause local movement. This is accepted in the Applicant's BIA in which the engineers highlight that the shrink swell clays risk is moderate, with ground conditions having predominantly high plasticity.

We also note that paragraph 1.5.4 of the BIA specifically states that one of the exclusions from its scope is:

"Ground Movement Assessment (GMA), to include assessment of significant adverse impacts and specific mitigation measures required, as well as confirmatory and reasoned statement identifying likely damage to nearby properties according to the Burland Scale."

We can therefore not be confident that all the necessary investigations and assessments have been completed. We have not seen satisfactory evidence that the proximity of our house, our pool and associate plumbing, our outbuildings (see point 4 below) or the adjacent hill have been considered.

4. The drainage assessment does not take into account the existing outbuildings on our property, and incorrectly refers to the site and surrounding topography being flat. It has therefore not considered all relevant factors to ensure there is no drainage impact on neighbouring buildings.

Our property includes a garage and gym which are accessed at street level from Ranulf Road. As mentioned above, the steepness of Ranulf Road as it falls away from Burgess Hill, and the artificially elevated level of the gardens in Burgess Hill, means that our garage and gym are built underneath our garden.

There are several references to the drainage and run-off in the Applicant's BIA. However, the report makes multiple references to the site and surrounding topography being flat, while failing to disclose the vertical drop from the gardens of Burgess Hill to the property behind (6 Ranulf Road). It therefore doesn't address the extent to which the proposed basement may impact water run-off by obstructing – and therefore rerouting – water flowing from Burgess Hill street level down to neighbours either side.

We do not wish to be unneighbourly and fully understand the Applicant's desire to improve his property. In summary:

- We believe the ground level infill and first floor extension will materially impact on our property and quality of life due to enclosure and loss of natural light. It will make access impossible for repairs and maintenance. It will destroy an important original architectural feature and is out of keeping with the character of the street and other houses on The Hocrofts.
- We have no objection in principle to the construction of a basement but are very concerned about the potential for damage to our own property, pool and outbuildings. It is abundantly clear that the various assessments and reports have not taken all of the relevant factors into account.
- The BIA report acknowledges that the Applicant did not share the detailed plans with us before submission, so we have not yet had the opportunity to discuss these or other relevant issues (e.g. building method, access, hours of working etc.) with him. It also acknowledges that various other required documents have not yet been submitted.

Photographs are attached to illustrate the above points.

Should it be helpful, we would welcome the opportunity to meet you at the property to review and discuss any of the above.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Andrew Shaw.

Andrew Shaw

Site photographs



Area of proposed ground level infill extension looking down from first floor window. The photo illustrates the exceptionally narrow gap between our houses at certain points at ground level, and which would be completely out of keeping if extended. An infill and first floor extension would severely restrict access to the side of our house, especially the chimney breast, for repairs and maintenance.

Window at ground level that would suffer significantly reduced natural light by construction of the proposed infill and extension.

Roof of Applicant's existing garden shed which encroaches upon and overhangs our land.

1. Location of proposed ground level infill extension



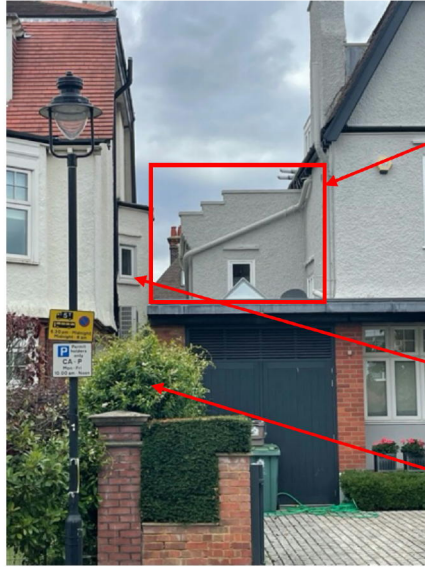
Area of proposed ground level infill extension from ground level.

The Applicant's existing wall (RHS) would be extended up to our chimney breast, and to a height slightly above our pebbledash lip.

It would block significant natural light from our ground floor window, which predominantly comes from above.

It would also severely restrict access for repairs and maintenance, if not make them impossible, by further constraining what is already a very narrow gap.

2. Location of proposed ground level infill extension



Area of proposed first floor side extension which would destroy the important historic 'stepped' architectural detail and remove the gap and space between the properties, both of which are features of local houses. It would also materially reduce our natural light and severely restrict access to the side of our house, especially the chimney breast, for repairs and maintenance.

First floor window that would be denied natural light by construction of the proposed side extension. The proposed extension would be vertically in line with the side of the garage and come forwards almost to the front façade.

The ground floor window shown in photo 1 above is obscured by foliage. All the light it receives comes from above, which would also be blocked by the proposed extension.

3. Location of proposed first floor extension



The location and area taken up by the proposed first floor extension as seen from our first floor window.

If the application is approved, all natural light will be obscured, the important historic stepped architectural features will be destroyed and the view from the window will be a solid brick wall.

4. View from our first floor side window



The windows from which our natural light would be blocked by the proposed extension are towards the rear of our house, within an extremely narrow gap, and in line with the Applicant's rear chimney breast. Historically important architectural features common to the area would be destroyed.

It is self-evident from the Applicant's CGI that almost all natural daylight would be blocked from the side windows of our house. The gap between the properties will be reduced to a few centimetres which is out of keeping with all other houses in the street and the surrounding area and will make access for repairs and decorating impossible.

5. Applicant's CGI of proposed front elevation