

COMMENTS RELATING TO PLANS FOR ENLARGEMENT GROUND-FLOOR EXTENSION - 10 EVANGELIST ROAD

As I understand it, this proposal shows the intended location, and very approximate extent of an area of enlargement at the rear of the existing building. It is difficult to comment on, however, since it contains so little of the substantive information/relevant detail regarding the design concept and plans; materials to be used; and proposed construction procedure, that would be required for the assessment of such a project. There is no discussion of the considerable impact the building and its construction are likely to have on immediate neighbours/adjacent properties. It does not appear to be integrated with any plans for the remaining garden space.

PLANS

The plans submitted are somewhat vague and imprecise and appear to have been largely adopted - as needed - from those used by house n° 8 in support of its recent planning application. Whilst the houses in the road may be near-identical or mirror-images of each other in their basic concept, their successive refurbishments over time will have left them with individual differences that are unique to each property and that only apply in situ. It may be that some of these particularities have been copied over into the plans for n° 10, which appear not to be precise - or reliable and that give rise to somewhat misleading impressions in the proposal as a result. A few key measurements remain unclear. No measurements are specified in the drawings and plans, in which there are several omissions and errors - whilst individually each of these may be insignificant, overall, the lack of attention to detail in an undertaking that is likely to impact on several different properties, is concerning.

(Note: the photo of the front of the property is of the facades of houses n° 11 and 13 across the road. The other photo is of the existing extension at the rear of the house, but the caption; "current patio area --- with 2-storey wall to the right ---" relates to, and only makes sense for, the extension at house n° 8.

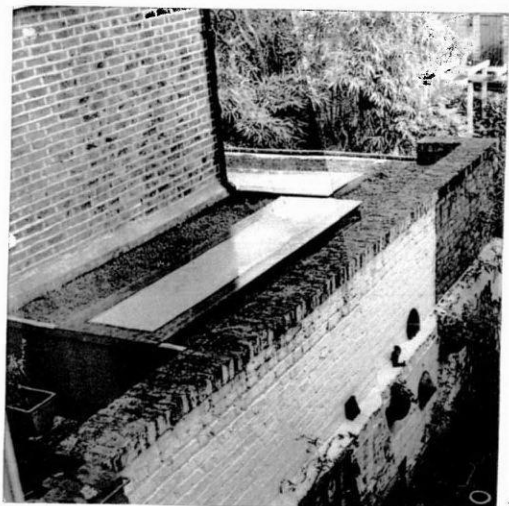
The plans show only the flat on its own, and not the context of the building in which it is located, with its communal entrance, hallway, and stairs, and which appears to have given rise to some inaccuracies and distortion in the layout.

I have already commented on the impact to the first-floor flat that any building-out of the ground-floor rear extension is likely to have. The plans confirm that as a result of such an enlargement, it would be surrounded on all sides by built-up space, and that consequently the sense of enclosure, loss of privacy, compromised outlook - and security - already initiated by the development at n° 12, would be intensified; whilst the direct and open views onto the gardens would be lost.

PHOTO 1 - INTENDED LOCATION ENLARGED EXTENSION N° 10.

PHOTO 2 - ENLARGED EXTENSION NEXT-DOOR





DESIGN CONCEPT

The plans show the existing rear extension built-out across the full width of the property, up to the boundary with n° 12 next door, and extending along its whole length. It is shown built out, by the same amount, beyond the existing end-wall, towards the garden. The built-out structure is shown as having:

1/ a glass roof, and 2/ folding glass doors at the garden end. A small "patio" 3/ is shown as occupying the space just outside the kitchen area, currently used as a glass-covered conservatory.

1/ GLASS ROOF: The built-out part of the extension is shown as having a glass roof made up of a number of sections or panels. On the roof-plan they are shown as being square or near-square, in shape: 6 along the length, and 8 across the width of the building, at the rear (although given the actual measurements involved, I doubt that this precise configuration of square-shaped panels is possible in practice). No further information is given regarding: the height of the roof, panel size and finish, glass type and thickness, whether it is clear or obscure, whether the panels can be opened - or moved.

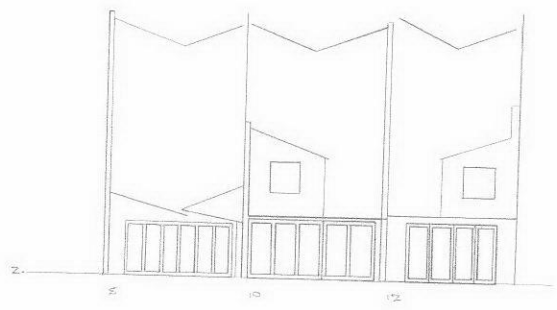
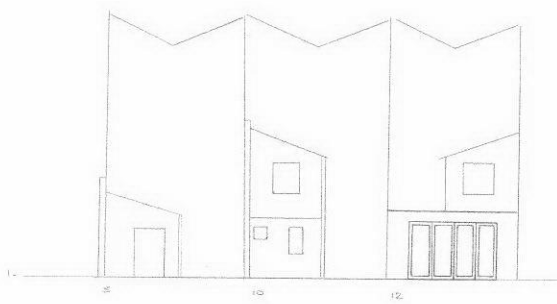
The side-elevation and section drawings show the roof at a height of 2.7m, i.e. higher than the existing ground-floor ceiling, and possibly over the floor-level of the flat above - to which I would specifically object. It is not clear how the different ceiling heights would be treated internally.

2/ END-WALL FOLDING GLASS DOORS - REAR ELEVATION IN CONTEXT

The existing end-wall is shown as built-out in the direction of the garden, although it is unclear by how much. (According to most of the drawings this measurement is around 1.2m, but if it is to be the same as the width enlargement, it would be nearer 2/2m). The roof consists of 3 squares of glass. The end-wall itself is shown as consisting entirely of the 5, aluminium-framed, glass panels of a folding door. This arrangement is very similar to that of the enlarged extension at n° 12 next door, and to what is currently proposed for n° 8.

If scattered among clusters of traditional houses, the feature of the modern glass doors at the end of an extension may create visual interest, but in this case the same treatment would appear in three houses in a row, with an impressive total of 15 glass doors arrayed across the width of the three properties (see drawing over). My sense is that the result would be highly conspicuous, overbearing - perhaps even creating the impression of a single dwelling, and not at all in keeping with the architecture of the locality. The arrangement would probably be especially visible from houses 15-21 in Bughtley Road.

1. EXISTING END-WALL AT HOUSES N° 8, 10, 12, WITH ENLARGED EXTENSION AT N° 12.
2. PROPOSED END-WALL DEVELOPMENT AT HOUSES N° 8 AND 10 - (VIEW FROM GARDEN).



3/. PROPOSED PATIO

The size of the patio is not specified. On the plans it is shown to be 11/2m across, but since the width of the existing garden passage which it is intended to occupy is around 2 1/2 m, this is likely to be incorrect.

- It is unclear from the plan whether or not it is covered.

- Doors are shown leading into it from 3 sides:

1/ from the kitchen, where the existing door is retained;

2/ from the bedroom - in the curve of the building,

[This door is shown - incorrectly, as already existing on the plans.

In this location there is, in fact, a large sash-window with wooden shutters. This window has a very pleasant outlook directly onto the gardens and it is probably the most attractive original feature of the whole flat, that it would be a pity to lose.]

3/ from the glass-covered extension, directly opposite - on the other side of the patio.

No drawing or description is provided of two facet of the extension which, viewed from the first floor above, would be its most visible/prominent aspect.

My sense is that the arrangement of 3 sets of doors around so small a space, so close to the main part of the building - and just below the large window above, could easily turn out to be a source of continual noise and disturbance.

- The proposal does not explain what the main function of the patio is, e.g. does it provide a way of retaining the existing external plumbing arrangement that are currently routed along the walls outside the kitchen? (There is no mention of plumbing in the proposal, and the plumbing details depicted in the drawings are those of house no. 6.)

- In its proportions and location the 'patio' space very much resembles the 'lightwell' of the enlarged extension at no. 12, which has not, in my view, been a design success, and is proving to be a source of noise nuisance. Viewed from above, the two spaces would be almost - but not quite, adjacent, and not especially attractive.

PHOTO 3 shows part of the existing conservatory roof in the space where the patio would be sited.

PHOTO 4 shows the existing conservatory in the lower left corner, with the almost adjacent 'lightwell' in the enlarged extension next door (grey sawn in the smaller picture to the right).





DIMENSIONS AND VOLUME ALLOWANCE

As already mentioned, the plans provided are imprecise, and key measurements are difficult to determine. According to my calculation, based on the first-floor flat:

1. The built-out area should measure about $2\frac{1}{2}$ m across, which is the width of the existing garden passage. On the drawings, the space is shown as extending by the same amount all around the building - but only measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ m, which is much narrower than the garden passage. It is therefore unclear whether the end-wall at the rear should be built-out by $1\frac{1}{2}$ m, or adjusted to $2\frac{1}{2}$ m. In the rough drawing to the right, I have given this measurement as 1.7 m, which is what appears on the proposed side-elevation and long-section drawings.

2. According to my calculation, the length of the existing extension is around 7.75 m. This is shown correctly in the plans, which give the overall built-out extent of the enlarged shed as 9.3 m.

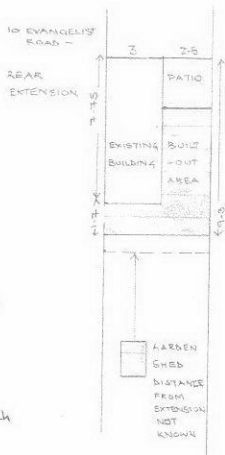
3. The height of the glass roof is shown as 2.7 m on the elevation drawings.

According to my calculation, these dimensions should give an overall volume of 76.54 cubic metres.

I am not sure if the additional volume allowance for a terrace house is 50 m³ or 70 m³ (from: PLANNING: A GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS 2003), but either way the proposal exceeds it, whilst being only one of three flats in a house, rather than a single dwelling.

Note: it is possible that an existing shed in the garden may come within 5 metres of the built-out structure.

(Despite the significant enlargement of the extension, there is no increase in the number of rooms. An extra bedroom is lost, and the bathroom, which is moved to a completely internal location, would become smaller than before. The emphasis appears to be placed entirely on the opening out and enlargement of the kitchen/living space.)



NECESSARY DEMOLITION WORK.

No details of the proposed demolition/construction procedure are given, although the enlargement of the extension appears to require the demolition of almost all the existing walls at the rear of the ground floor, which would impact dramatically on the first floor - as already outlined (and illustrated) in my previous comments.

The intention appears to be to remove/demolish:

- 1/ most of the existing side-wall;
- 2/ the whole of the existing end-wall of the extension;
- 3/ the 2 existing internal walls.

If this is correct, the only load-bearing wall left would be the party-wall with no 8, around which work is due to begin shortly, with its extension enlargement project.

On the plans, however, neither the demolition of the end-wall, nor of the two internal walls is indicated. Only the side wall is shown as being removed, and in the accompanying form, no demolition is indicated in the responses to questions 3 and 9 regarding description of, and explanation for any necessary demolition work.

Overall, there seems to be a general paucity of information regarding work that is likely to be highly disruptive, but that will also necessitate complex measures to support/shore up the existing first-floor structure with the removal of the main load-bearing walls below. I have already outlined my concerns about such an undertaking, based on observing the work involved in the recent enlargement project at no 12. I would strongly object to similar work involving demolition and interference with the structural fabric of the building being carried out here.

IMPACT ON VEGETATION

Regarding the presence of trees on the site (Q.13 on accompanying form), I have already mentioned the laburnum tree just beyond the end-wall of the extension, and next to the boundary wall with no 12, whose roots could be affected by any further construction work nearby.