

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2014/4554/P	Vanora Bennett	135 Torriano Avenue Kentish Town London NW5 2RX	30/09/2014 23:55:26	OBJ	<p>I wish to object to the proposed extension to the former pub building on the corner of Brecknock Road and Torriano Avenue for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed extension is too high and heavy for safety. There is serious subsidence risk in Torriano Avenue – two houses on the same side of the street collapsed in recent memory next to Joshua Lane, and had to be replaced by a council block which required substantial underpinning to put up safely. I have not seen any plans for similar prudent underpinning of this extension, even though adding an extra floor will make the building substantially heavier. 2. The style of the proposed extension is architecturally inappropriate for the residential area in which it is proposed. The area is made up of three- and four-storey Victorian houses built in the 1880s (they are not Edwardian as the planning proposal mistakenly states). The existing pub building fits naturally into this built environment, sharing the style of the surrounding houses on a slightly wider scale and set into a spacious garden that lets light in to surrounding gardens in a pleasing and natural way. By adding an extra floor to the building, the harmony of the arrangement would be destroyed. So would the privacy of the building's neighbours, as top-floor residents of the extended pub building would be able to look into all the neighbours' gardens. Perhaps most importantly of all, the ugly proposed extra floor would dominate the whole surrounding area in a highly unnatural and threatening way. 3. The proposed extension to the pub building not only makes little attempt to blend into the area's built environment, but includes what is billed as a deliberate contrast – described in the plans as aluminium fixed louvres in front of the new walls on the roof extension. This is less the contrast intended than a plain old conflict. The illustration provided of this style comes from the top of a commercial property on a shopping street – hardly a convincing proof that a large expanse of shiny metal, gleaming and flashing distractingly in the sun, is an appropriate building material for a densely populated residential area lived in by people who have been used for a century and a half to the enjoyment of the view of garden flowers and shrubs - not a giant strip of kitchen foil. This seems simply shoddy, gaudy and badly thought out design, which does not work where the proposal suggests putting it. And this in turn fails to inspire confidence in the general ability to do their job of the architects who have put together this plan. What other nasties might be lurking unseen? 4. Granting planning permission for this proposed extension would also be inconsistent, raising important questions as to what Camden Council's architectural policy is. The other side of Torriano Avenue from the pub building has been designated an area of architectural interest. It would be highly illogical for the Council to treasure the Victorian architecture on one side of the street - while at the same time allowing the visual charm of the other side of the street to be compromised by granting permission for a badly thought out modern extension. As well as the faults listed above, the proposed extension would remove the traditional corner quoins and chimney stacks of the existing building – which are characteristic and pleasing features of the period. 5. By cramming as much building as possible on a site not really equipped for it, moreover, the proposed extension would also create significant environmental problems. Water pressure at the top of the hill is already so low that it comes near the legal one-bar minimum. Sharing out the water among

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the six extra flats, and residents, listed in the plan – (a number which is likely to rise if the pub remaining on the ground floor also folds) would risk reducing the pressure still further, possibly below the legal minimum. Sewage pipes would likewise be put under pressure. There would be more issues with dustbins and refuse collection. There would be more noise and crowding issues. And there would be serious problems with parking if more drivers were suddenly to share the same spaces, which now just about serve the existing residents.

6. I recognize that extending the pub building at the back a certain amount is probably inevitable in these days of high house prices. Tidying up its many and unlovely bits of existing extension might even have been a benefit. If the proposed extension had stretched no further down the hill than the existing extensions in parallel gardens all along Brecknock Road, and gone no higher - thus avoiding blocking more light and using up more space than everyone else - I would have had no objection. But the proposal not only stretches across more of the open garden than the existing models, removing the garden that residents have enjoyed for so long (and incidentally going against the council's core strategy to encourage more green spaces in Camden), but also recklessly piles an extra storey on top, clearly in the hope of nothing more glorious than a quick profit. My objection today is not to the principle of an extension to this building, but purely to the combined greed and stupidity of the particular proposal set out in this application. The stack'em high, flog'em fast approach it reveals - with cheap, ugly and impracticable design that will have only negative impact on the streets around, and lead to all kinds of administrative problems for both residents and the council later - is surely not what Camden's planning department should be aiming for in developing Kentish Town with charm and style.

I will be willing to attend any planning meeting called to discuss this proposal and to speak at it to set out my objections.
