

**Development Types:**

**Residential Conversion**

**Description:**

**Basement excavation and extensions to loft, rear and side in connection with conversion of existing single family dwelling into 2x3 bedroom maisonettes (Class C3)**

**COMMENTS :**

**For the attention of Mr. Paul Gardiner, case officer.**

**Dear Mr. Gardiner**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NO 2013/6162/P**

**Basement excavation and extensions to loft, rear and side in connection with conversion of existing single family dwelling into 2 x 3 bedroom maisonettes (Class C3) by Mr Abhay Ruparell.**

**I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development in its current form.**

The increase in height will entirely remove access to daylight from one of the bedrooms and a study on the first floor of the detached neighbouring property, severely infringing on the right to light of the occupants in that residence. There is no evaluation of this in any of the drawings, despite it having such negative consequences on the adjacent building.

Raising of the roof by adding a new floor was rejected in the past when the original owner of No.2 Oakhill Avenue ( [REDACTED] ) applied to add one additional floor across the whole building. This was allowed only on the unit at the opposite end for reasons of daylight at No.4,

which are again raised by this application. As far as we are aware, the relevant rules have not changed in the intervening period.

Additional to the right to light issue, the new top floor (third) has windows to the side of the flat directly overlooking windows in number 4 (including an angled roof window through which residents of the new property will be able to fully see activity in number 4) as well as its terrace and garden. The proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony also looks directly over the party wall line, becoming a conspicuous vantage point looking into the private internal spaces of 4 Oakhill Avenue, as well as its terrace and gardens. We consider this a glaring infringement on privacy impinging on the quality of life in the property.

The increase in number of units is not offset with an increase in provision of parking spaces, which will put pressure on a road that already has a dearth of on-street parking, and will negatively impact on the environment of the street. Provision for communal bicycle parking does not seem to have been made either.

The architectural design of the alterations is not in keeping either with the warm modernism of the current terrace, nor with the Arts & Crafts character of the rest of the area, neither does it present itself as a piece of high quality contemporary architectural design, let alone one of outstanding quality, which is what we feel would be needed to justify its lack of contextuality. The design as it currently stands is an out of keeping, piece-meal addition of incongruous elements, without inherent merit in themselves. We would also like to note that there are no drawings of the very substantial elevation facing number 4, so it is impossible to discern what the architectural treatment, materials or quality of finishes are to be to this large expanse of façade, which in terms of surface area is the greatest exterior part of the proposal.

The neighbouring property at No.4 Oakhill Avenue is not included in any of the drawings submitted with the application thereby making it impossible to assess the impact and the scale of the works and alterations with regard to its fabric, character, disposition & structural integrity.

The structural issues involved in such ground-works for both a very close neighbouring property which does not have a basement (No.4), and a contiguous terrace house which shares party wall and foundations, in an area with ground water, aquifers and historic subsidence issues are very substantial and not adequately addressed in the application or the BIA. Main sewage pipework and access chambers of the detached neighboring house (No.4) lie only centimeters from the proposed digging.

We feel that due to the unusually sensitive, and large-scale nature of the ground-works and structural alterations on a complex site which will have a disproportionately large effect on neighbouring properties, this application needs to include the stipulation that the Applicants must be instructed to hire at their cost an independent structural engineer and underground water expert appointed by the neighbours to review the design prior to commencement of any works as well as overseeing the full duration of those works.

We are not in principle against development on the property, and would welcome a high quality design drawn up with due consideration that addresses the comments above. We find however that the application in its current form is far from this.

**Recommend for Rejection.**