

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2015/1217/P	Ellen Gates	11 Grove Terrace London NW5 1PH	13/04/2015 15:50:36	OBJ	<p>I am chair of the Grove Terrace Residents Association and I am writing on behalf of the members to object in the strongest terms to the proposals set out in these applications.</p> <p>These applications differ in only minor respects from the applications submitted under 2014/7203/L and 2014/7024/P, to which we also objected strongly. They should be rejected.</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Nos 6-27 Grove Terrace is listed Grade II* and is located in the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area. Grove Terrace, together with its gardens (front and back), not only is outstandingly beautiful, but also has a unique place in Camden's heritage.</p> <p>The Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement records that 'Nos 6-27, with their curtilages . . . are an unusually comprehensive survival of an 18th century piece of speculative development and are listed Grade II*.' It notes that 'The Terrace reads as a unified whole but has a pleasing rhythm within it. An important aspect of the whole terrace is its front gardens with mature shrubs, railings, low walls and original flagstones that form part of the setting of the listed buildings.'</p> <p>The front gardens are mirrored by the importance and setting of the rear gardens, which are at the heart of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, as well as in the curtilage of the listed buildings. They are bordered by brick walls of the same age as the buildings. These gardens are long and narrow, so that each house in Grove Terrace has the benefit of views over at least three or four gardens to each side—an unsurpassed example of borrowed landscape. Together they form a large open green space that is overlooked not only by Grove Terrace itself to the west but also by Woodsome Road to the north, Boscastle Road to the east and Dartmouth Park Road to the south. The many residents of these roads have the benefit of this green space that has existed since Grove Terrace was built in the eighteenth century.</p> <p>We therefore believe very strongly that it is essential to protect and preserve this space and not to encroach on it or to build on it.</p> <p>Excavation of lightwell</p> <p>It is not clear whether the excavation of the lightwell which was a significant feature of the earlier applications is included in the current applications. The description of the application still refers to enlargement of the lightwell, and there are still references in the Design and Access Statement to the existing railings being replaced like for like and for there to be a stair. However, the applicant, Mr Vara, previously assured us that he was not pursuing that enlargement. The drawings submitted with the new application show the existing coal cellars and say they will be tanked, suggesting that the applicant no longer proposes to excavate the lightwell. The applicant should be required to clarify the application.</p>

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If it is still proposed to excavate the lightwell, then we believe the proposal should be turned down for the following reasons:

1    Allowing the excavation would disrupt the overall unified effect of the lightwells and gardens for 6 -27 Grove Terrace, would harm the relationship between the building and the street and would disrupt the unity of the overall frontage of the listed terrace. It would therefore have an adverse impact on the listed building and its setting.

2    There is no justification for the removal of the existing railings (which are specifically mentioned in the listing description) and replacement with reproductions, or for the removal of the original coal cellars.

3    The removal of original fabric, the change in the historic size and shape of the lightwell, and the change in the relationship of the building to the garden and street would all be contrary to Camden's policy in respect of listed building and conservation area basement developments, as set out in paragraph 27.11 of Camden's Development Policies.

Rear extension

We continue to object strongly to the proposed extension at the rear of the property, which is substantially the same as in the previous applications. The length of this extension has been reduced from 7 metres to 6 metres; this is a trivial change. The width of the extension from wall to wall, the proposed green roof, the roof light and the dug out lower terrace (all of which were objectionable to neighbours in the original applications) are all retained in the current applications. Although there have been some changes in the profile of the lower terrace or courtyard dug out at lower ground floor level, the overall length of the dug out area (including the stepped terraces now proposed) appears to be somewhat greater than under the original proposal.

We object to this development for the following reasons:

4    Excessive scale: Even at 6 meters, the extension would be nearly as long again as the original depth of the house. We believe this would be an excessive development for the scale of the house and garden. It is out of proportion with all the existing extensions on the remainder of the Terrace, which (although they vary in date and style) are all roughly of the same (relatively modest) proportions.

The applicants make comparison to the existing extension of number 19. Camden's Development Policies at paragraph 24.13 recognise that 'Past alterations or extensions to surrounding properties should not necessarily be regarded as a precedent for subsequent proposals for alterations and extensions.' In any event, unlike number 19, this extension would cover the entire width of the house, running from garden wall to garden wall. Even if number 19 were acceptable as a precedent (which it is not), this is an incremental worsening of the impact of number 19's extension. Moreover, the residents of the Terrace have serious concerns that if permission is granted for this extension, the Council could have difficulty resisting similar developments elsewhere on the Terrace. The cumulative effect would be devastating to the character of the listed building.

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5    Adverse impact on garden setting: The Association has always been very concerned about the building of new structures in the gardens of Grove Terrace. This extension, which occupies an excessive part of the garden, not only would intrude into views from the houses of the immediate neighbours but would impinge on the views up and down the gardens, which as noted above is one of the most significant features of the Terrace.

6    Lower terrace: The further extension for a basement level courtyard is also unprecedented and, even with the revised profile in the current applications, would create further undue and objectionable incursion into the garden. The area of the garden available for planting would be greatly reduced, adversely impacting the green aspect of the gardens. The proposal would further significantly erode the aspect of 'borrowed landscape' which is such a feature of Grove Terrace, and adversely impact both the character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed Terrace. Not only is there no need to destroy a beautiful garden in this way, but the lower terrace is unlikely to be successfully used for the purposes anticipated by the applicant. This part of the gardens gets limited light due to the heights of garden walls and sun angle, and this will be made even worse by putting the terrace at the lower level. It is likely to soon become an unused and abandoned space.

7    Impact on stability of other houses: The size of the garden extension also raises concerns about the impact on the stability of other houses in the Terrace, both during construction and in the longer term. The application documents do not provide any information on how the neighbouring houses will be supported during excavation and construction of the extension. The houses in Grove Terrace have minimal foundations, and are likely to be adversely affected by the significant excavation proposed. Moreover, they are located on London clay, which is prone to shrinking/swelling and heave, resulting in frequent movement to the Terrace. At present, the houses tend to move in concert, as a block, so there is limited visual evidence of such movement on the exterior. However, there is serious concern about what the effect would be if one house were underpinned, so that it did not move in concert with the others. Residents are seriously concerned that this could have significant impacts on the stability of other houses in the Terrace in the longer term. The applicant has provided no information about how such adverse effects would be prevented.

8    Violation of basement policy: Camden's Development Policy 27 states that 'the Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity'. By virtue of the size and unprecedented incursion into the garden, the proposed development contravenes this policy. It also is at odds with the growing consensus that basement extensions should not be permitted on listed buildings. The Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, for example, has recently adopted a total ban on basement extensions for listed buildings.

9    Disruption from spoil removal: The degree of excavation that would be required for this development is a major concern. If this were done with mechanical diggers, the impact on neighbouring properties could be significant. In addition, the excavated spoil would all need to be removed through the front of number 18 or from Grove Terrace Mews (which runs behind the Grove Terrace gardens). However, removal through the Mews is unlikely to be practical, as there is a weight limit at the entrance to the Mews as a result of the fragile cellars running under numbers 21 and 22. In

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					<p>either case, removal of this quantity of spoil would result in many months of disruption. Grove Terrace is a single lane wide, with restrictions on access from the north at certain times of the day. The numerous lorry movements required to remove the spoil will regularly block Grove Terrace, creating safety concerns about accessibility for ambulances and fire engines, in addition to the significant burden and disruption to residents. The scale of the works is simply unacceptable in such a constrained environment.</p> <p>10 Harm to listed garden walls: The effect of the extension on the historic garden walls is not clear from the application documentation, but is a serious concern. There is no explanation how the walls (which have no foundations) would be protected during the construction. Although not expressly suggested in the application documentation, we would like to make it clear that it would be totally unacceptable for the historic walls to be demolished and reconstructed.</p> <p>11 Light pollution: The proposed rooflight would introduce an extensive area of glass which would create night-time illumination. The Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy specifically notes the 'quality of darkness at night' that characterises the conservation area. The Grove Terrace gardens contribute significantly to that quality. At present, they constitute a large area of darkness with minimal external lighting; this is extremely rare in London. The use of rooflights in this extension thus would not only be intrusive to immediate neighbours, but would also erode the character of this dark area more generally. There are no enforceable means of preventing this. Day-time reflection would also be intrusive.</p> <p>12 Materials/green roof: The proposal for a green roof is also of concern. It would be out of keeping with the gardens for the rest of the Terrace and, if not properly maintained, could become an eyesore. There are no enforceable means of ensuring its upkeep and maintenance. If any extension roof were clad in sympathetic materials (for example, York stone similar to that of the existing terrace), it might be more acceptable.</p> <p>13 Use of roof as terrace: Although not entirely clear, there are suggestions in the application documents that the applicant now proposes to use the roof of the rear extension as a terrace. If so, this would present serious issues of overlooking. Moreover, we understand that, given the proposed drop in elevation from the roof to the lower terrace, railings would be required around the roof under the building regulations. This would increase the unsightliness of the proposed extension and detract from the setting of the listed building.</p> <p>Internal alterations</p> <p>We have fewer concerns about the proposed internal alterations. Our overriding concern would be to see the retention of any original or historic material.</p> <p>Application documentation</p> <p>14 Inadequate Construction Management Plan: Camden's Development Policies at paragraph 26.10</p>

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require a construction management plan to identify the potential impacts of the construction phase of the development and state how any potential negative impacts will be mitigated. The very cursory Construction Method Statement provided by the applicants is completely inadequate for the scale of the works proposed. For example, there is no description of how the neighbouring houses and walls would be supported and protected during construction. Nor is there an adequate description of how traffic would be managed on the narrow, one-lane Grove Terrace.

Conclusions

The proposed development would:

- cause harm to the special interest of a listed building and adversely impact on features of special architectural or historic interest, contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Development Policy 25(f);
- (if the front lighwell is to be excavated) result in the demolition of a part of a listed building without any showing of exceptional circumstances, contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Development Policy 25(e);
- cause harm to the setting of a listed building, contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Development Policy 25(g);
- undermine the existing uniformity of Grove Terrace, contrary to Camden's Development Policies at paragraph 24.13;
- neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and would impact adversely on the visual amenity of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Development Policy 25(b);
- not preserve garden spaces which contribute to the character of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage, contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Development Policy 25(e);
- by reason of its length, size and scale have an adverse impact on the quality of life and amenity of neighbours, particularly in respect of outlook and artificial light levels, contrary to Camden Development Policies 26(b) and 26(c); and
- lead to the loss of open space and harm the appearance or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area, contrary to Camden Development Policies 27(e) and 27(g).

The importance of settings such as the Grove Terrace gardens is emphasised in Camden's Development Policies at paragraph 22.15:

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‘The setting of a listed building is of great importance and should not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development. While the setting of a listed building may be limited to its immediate surroundings, it often can extend some distance from it. The value of a listed building can be greatly diminished if unsympathetic development elsewhere harms its appearance or its harmonious relationship with its surroundings.’

For these reasons the proposed development should be refused.

We would like to be notified of the date for any committee consideration of the applications and to have a representative attend and speak at any such meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen Gates  
Chair  
Grove Terrace Association

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2015/1217/P	Jane Hives	24 Grove Terrace	13/04/2015 16:42:03	OBJ	<p>It is unclear from the documentation whether it is intended to change the front lightwell and significantly reduce the front garden in similar terms to the previous application (2014/7203/L and 2014/7024/P). If this is the case, I object to the proposals, which should be turned down because they would destroy the historic frontage of Grove Terrace.</p> <p>There has been a minor reduction in the size of the proposed rear extension from the original application, but it remains entirely out of proportion with the house and all other rear extensions in the Terrace. In particular, it is vastly greater in bulk than that at No 19. The latter was objected to strongly by Grove Terrace residents, especially because it might set a precedent. However, I do not believe that there is any precedent in this instance. In addition, the conservatory at No 19 is much narrower, shorter, lighter and less imposing. The proposed rear extension fills the entire width of the plot and with its proposed courtyard, would be very intrusive in the landscape of the Terrace rear gardens. The extensive excavation required to build out the proposals would undermine adjoining buildings, as well as the historic garden walls, which are part of the listing.</p> <p>For all of these reasons, I object to the proposed new rear extension and courtyard.</p>
2015/1217/P	Michael Lilley	24 Grove Terrace	13/04/2015 16:44:49	OBJ	<p>I am writing to object to the new rear extension, because it is far too large and together with the proposed courtyard, it will harm the rear landscape, adjoining listed buildings and walls of Grove Terrace.</p>

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