
From: Nicola Coleman [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 June 2015 15:18
To: Craig, Tessa
Subject: 56 Hawtrey Road proposed basement extension

Dear Ms Craig

Having spoken to Anna Williamson, I thought it might be helpful to write to explain what happened during our similar basement conversion, at 86 Hawtrey Road, last year. The letter signed by some neighbours which is viewable in the related documents section of No. 56's application contains a number of inaccuracies which I would like to address.

1. Whilst we completed our purchase of No. 86 in November 2013, due to a long delay in our planning application being granted, the house stood empty until July 2014 when the building work commenced. We took up residence in November 2014 – a little over five months from when the builders started. To imply that our work took anything approaching a year is plain wrong.
2. The digging out of our basement took less than eight weeks but would have been quicker had one of our neighbours not constantly demanded that our builders 'down tools' for various personal reasons.
3. The noisy work does not go on for 24 hours a day and nor did vehicles arrive and leave on a constant basis.
4. There has been no ground movement as a result of our project. No cracking of floors, walls or ceilings and no garden subsidence. The party wall agreements have all been signed off and our immediate neighbours are enjoying improvements to their gardens at our expense as is usual in these circumstances. In fact, please note that it was eventually agreed to build the walls of our extension straddling the neighbours' boundaries, on both sides, to make it easier for any future purchasers of those houses to build similar extensions.
5. The disruption created by our small basement extension was pretty fleeting. It did not continue throughout the course of the project and only affected the first few weeks of our build. We did however gut the house and I'm sure there was disruption caused by our pulling down of ceilings, installing new plumbing and electrics, pulling down and putting up new walls and floors and installing bathrooms, the kitchen, wardrobes and everything else involved in a total refurbishment.
6. None of our neighbours felt the need to take rented accommodation during the course of our build. This is London and within reason, people surely must be allowed to improve and extend their homes? With the benefit of hindsight, I might advise that once there is a works schedule, it would be a good idea to inform neighbours, some of whom may choose to arrange their holidays around the worst of the work.
7. The impact on the wider neighbourhood is also a passing one, minimal in the overall scheme of things and again, one has to expect that people who live in houses built in the 1970s/1980s will want to bring them up to modern standards by significantly improving them every so often.

In an urban environment, building works are an occupational hazard. Modest basement extensions are a very sensible way of extending living space to suit the demands of modern day living which I and my husband support this planning application.

It is regretful that these matters cannot be approached in a more friendly and consultative manner. After all, we will still be neighbours once this building project is complete.

Kind regards

Nicola Coleman

