

November 10th 2015

Re Application Ref: 2015/5761/P

To whom it may concern,

I strongly object to the above planning application.

Currently the properties on the South side of Chester Road look straight down between the gardens of Winscombe Street and Bertram Street, two rows of traditional terracing. From my apartment I see just brick and greenery. The views from the adjoining properties on Chester Road extend all the way down to the community centre, and are as they must have been since they were built.

The proposed project, especially the addition of a 2nd level would materially change that view. It would not only change the clean traditional lines at the back of the terrace, and obstruct the view, but it would stand out and demand attention. As is stated explicitly in section 2.6 of the planning statement, the project would be:

‘...designed so that a clear visual juxtaposition is maintained between the original fabric of the building and the proposed modern extension’

This may be appealing from a design perspective but it would neither retain nor enhance the existing character of the conservation area. The importance of doing so is mentioned again and again in Camden’s Development Police document. It would in my opinion contravene all of the following sections of the policy:

CDP25

‘In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will:’

- **(b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area**
- **(e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for**

Camden's architectural heritage.

CDP 25.2

- We will seek to manage change in a way that **retains the distinctive characters of our conservation areas** and will expect new development to contribute positively to this.

CDP 25.3

- The character and appearance of a conservation area can be eroded through the loss of traditional architectural details such as historic windows and doors, characteristic, rooftops, **garden settings** and boundary treatments.

CDP 25.5

- Development will not be permitted which causes the loss of trees and/or **garden space where this is important to the character and appearance of a conservation area.**

CDP 27.2

- Although basement developments can help to make efficient use of the borough's limited land it is important that this is done in a way that does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours, affect the stability of buildings, cause drainage or flooding problems, **or damage the character of areas or the natural environment.**

I can only imagine that the architects consider 'the area' to mean those parts visible from the street. In doing so they negate the impact of the changes on a very large number of local residents. As they helpfully state in the planning statement:

*3.8 The guidance seeks to primarily resist roof extensions and alterations, and to **protect rear elevations where it forms "an integral part of the character of the area"***

Uniformity

Much of the character of the terraces comes from its uniformity, something that would be broken both by the extension as well as by the materials used. This issue is covered specifically in the following sections of the policy:

CDP 24.7

- Development should consider: the impact on existing rhythms, symmetries and **uniformities** in the townscape

CDP 24.12

- Where townscape is particularly **uniform** attention should be paid to responding closely to the prevailing scale, form and proportions and materials.

CDP 24.15

- the cladding and painting of masonry can also spoil the appearance of buildings and can be particularly damaging if the building forms part of a **uniform** group.

Subordination

Also mentioned in the policy is the matter ‘subordination’

CDP 24.13

- Extensions should therefore be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation, unless, exceptionally, it is demonstrated that this is not appropriate given the specific circumstances of the building.

Boldly the architects refer to this in their planning statement....

2.4 Section 4 of the guidance seeks that local character and design should be taken into account and that extensions appear subordinate to the host building..

The fact that they reference it does not make it true. Seen from Chester Road the proposed extension would neither be subordinate nor would it ‘harmonise into the garden setting’ as stated in the planning statement.

2.7 The materiality of the proposal further ensures visual subordination to the host dwelling - including the use of minimal window frames finished in anodised aluminium, white render, and cedar slats; which will weather well and harmonise into the

surrounding garden setting.

There is harmony now. The project would seriously affect that harmony.

Occupying an excessive part of a garden

The gardens and the space between terraces have as much influence on the character of the area as the buildings themselves. The proposed project will have a very great impact on the garden and the space. This matter is specifically referred to in the CDP:

CDP 24.20

- Development within rear gardens and other undeveloped areas can often have a significant impact upon the amenity and character of an area. Gardens help shape their local area, **provide a setting for buildings and can be important visually**. Therefore they can be an important element in the character and identity of an area (its 'sense of place'). **We will resist development that occupies an excessive part of a garden**, and where there is a loss of garden space, which contributes to the character of the townscape.

Privacy / Noise

Currently the outside space at 1a is at garden level. As a result of the existing fencing this means a great deal of privacy for residents in the adjoining gardens at 39 and especially at 41 Chester Road. The building of a terrace will have a material impact both on noise levels and on privacy. Once again this will contravene the CDP, which states:

CDP26:

Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

- The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. The factors we will consider include:
 - a) visual privacy and overlooking;
 - b) overshadowing and outlook;
 - c) sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels;
 - d) noise and vibration levels;

The planning statement attempts to address this by stating:

2.12 A planted wall (approx. height of 1.5 metres from terrace floor level) which will blend into surrounding high level foliage to the north of the site;

This 'wall' will not preclude many adults from being able to look over the gardens of 39 and 41 Chester Road as well as all the other surrounding gardens, and will seriously compromise the privacy of those in the ground and first floor flats at those addresses.

In addition to the issue of privacy, the proposed project will have a serious impact on noise levels. Until now any noise has come from garden level and has been contained by the fencing. Noise from the terrace will have no such barrier and voices from will be easily heard in all the surrounding gardens.

To conclude, I strongly object to the proposed project, which feels as if it is borne out of want not need. My views might have been different had the proposal been for a ground level extension for which there is local precedent. There is no such precedent for an upper level extension or for a roof terrace. I urge Camden's planning department to reject this proposal and preserve the integrity of the area.